

'A ROLLING STONE.'

BY MRS. M. SHEFFEY PETERS.

THE village adjacent to Uncle Israel's cabin was honored, one summer, by the advent of Monsieur Delapine, who came there for health and recreation. His valet, Scipio, took delight in telling marvelous tales of things he had seen in the great world. It is possible that neither Baron Munchausen nor Sinbad the Sailor ever dilated on stranger lands or peoples. It set Juba wild to "see de wo'ld" also. Once he hinted something of this to Uncle Israel. "None o' dat, now," was the prompt answer. "Yo' jes' stay at home, an' do yo' work; a rollin' stone nebber gits no moss nohow, as de Scriptur' says."

But when Juba repeated this to Scipio, the latter laughed derisively.

"I tell yo' what, Juba," he said: "ef I wuz ez young ez yo' is, an' no wife ner chile ter be millstones rouin' my neck, I'd nebber mind what de ole man says, but set out fo' de happy lan' o' Canaan myself. Gunny muggles! I'd go an' see de wo'ld, an' not stay pokin' yere on dis ole plantashun."

Juba rolled his eyes. Visions of lands of enchantment rose before him.

"Specs de ole folks'll cut up didoes," he said. "But den, ef Juba's once off, dey can't cut up him, kin dey? Jes' say whar I'se got ter go fust, when I sets out, Mr. Skippo."

"Oh, ter de seapo't somewhar," carelessly returned Scipio. "No'fulk, Va'ginny, say. It's ez good a place ez any ter start from—eh, Jube?"

Juba nodded.

Scipio winked, and nodded too; but, privately, he guessed that Juba was only in fun, as he himself was. The trouble was, however, that Juba took the proposition in dead earnest; and so, secretly began preparations for his departure.

Fortune favored him. Aunt Hannah had to keep a night-watch, about this time, with a sick member of the "Nevolin Society," of which she was the president. So, with strict injunctions to Juba to "keep his eyes open, an' watch t'ings," she departed.

From the "double-shuffle" and "pigeon-swing" Juba executed on the stoop, as the fluttering of her "flop-eared" bonnet vanished at the turn of the lane, one might judge how he enjoyed the prospect before him. "Whoopee!" he exclaimed, turning round and round as if on a pivot. "Won't dar be a rumpus when de ole

lady hunts fur Juba to-morrow, an' fin's him nowhar? Now fur No'fulk, Va'ginny! A better time dan dis yere'll be long a-comin'."

Finally, turning a somersault backwards, as a sort of escape-valve to his excited feelings, Juba began a promiscuous rummaging through the pet possessions of his aunt. Fortunately for her peace of mind, the large "chist," enshrining her most cherished belongings, was double-locked, and the key, Juba remembered with dismay, was hooked that moment, securely, to the waistband of her ample apron.

"An' dq on'y Sunday clo'es I'se got's in dat 'dential chist," he whimpered. "What's I gwine ter do widout 'em?"

A survey of the tattered garments dangling against the gable wall of his own special cuddy, under the roof, did not tend, either, to soothe his perturbed spirit.

"I mought ez well gib it up," he groaned. "Tain't no use goin' in rags like dese."

Suddenly a brilliant idea struck him.

"Huccum!" he cried, "I kin be ez fine ez Mr. Skippo hisself! Ain't dar dem rej'mentals ob Daddy Isrul? Dey'se got brass buttons, too—all ober 'em. An' de coat is scissors-tail, too. Dar hain't none like it been made since de big muster-days, mos' t'irty years back, I'se heerd Uncle Isrul say. His ole mars'er gib 'em to 'im."

Trembling in all his joints with excitement, Juba tumbled down the rickety ladder, and, dragging from underneath the four-post bed the chest devoted to the wardrobe of Uncle Israel, he began to overhaul its contents, lighting at the very bottom on the famous regimentals, covered all over with rows of brass buttons, as he had said, each bravely displaying the American eagle.

"Whew!" he cried, "won't Daddy be on his high hoss when he misses dese? Juba Bensle, yo'll hab some fas' trabbelin' ter do when yo' take 'em, or de ole man'll catch yo', sho'."

Very soon, the regimentals were strapped into a bundle, and hung upon the crook of "Ole Isrul's" Sunday cane. Then selecting from his own garments the best tow-linen jacket and trousers he had, Juba hung them on a chair, where he could lay hands upon them the first thing in the morning. Aunt Hannah's corner-cupboard furnished a substantial lunch, which he added to his equipment.

Thus prepared for an early start, Juba, wearied by the unusual strain on body and mind, yawned, beginning to think of climbing up to his bunk in the cabin-loft, when all at once his eye fell on Aunt Hannah's company-bed, seductive in its starchy whiteness of pillow-slip and counterpane, that loomed up before his eyes too invitingly to be resisted.

"'Twill be de fust time, an' de las', I reckon," he chuckled, as he turned down the crisp sheets and slipped in between them. "Aunt Hanner'd pepper an' brile dis chicken ef she cotched 'im on dis roos'; he'll take keer, dough, ter be offen it, an' on de high road ter No'fulk, 'fore de break ob day."

And, sure enough, long before the sun had time to light up the Allegheny peaks, Juba, whistling to keep his courage up, was briskly trudging along the by-roads, making for a distant station, where he might board a train without fear of having troublesome questions asked.

For quite a distance his sturdy legs were plied, almost in rivalry of those of Jack in the Seven-League Boots. But so much active exercise naturally soon brought a gnawing sense of hunger. In the recesses of a woodland he stopped, therefore, to rest and refresh himself. A hearty breakfast was made from the contents of the wallet; and he was about to resume his tramp, when the weight of his bundle suggested to him the idea of trying on his regimentals. "De towlin jacket an' trousers'll be lighter ter shoulder," he said; and presto! in less than five minutes, the change was effected. That the suit was a moth-eaten one, of rather loose fit, made small difference to our hero, when the sleeve-cuffs were turned back, and the slight—very slight—trailing of the swallow-tails on the ground was remedied by pinning them up with a few big thorns from a thorn-bush near by. Nor was there the shadow of a fault to be found with the cap. It fitted him to a T, while, in length and whiteness, its plume might have rivaled that of Henry of Navarre.

With head erect, and shoulders braced, Juba set forth again on his march, the few wayfarers he met exalting his soul by their stares and ejaculations. Towards sunset, he saw a lad, possibly four or five years his senior, lying full length on the ground, under a rail-fence. As he swaggered proudly forward, this ragged stranger got up, and, with both hands thrust deep in his trousers-pockets, leered at Juba.

"Stars an' brass buttons, Cap'n," was his salutation, "hab yo' been in de army, fightin' de Injuns?"

"No, sah," returned Juba, politely, "I hain't

j'ined de army yit, sah, but I'se gwine ter j'ine, I s'pose. Jes' now I'se boun' fo' No'fulk."

"Yo' don't calkerlate ter go de whole way ter-night, does yo'?"

"I reckon not," rejoined our traveler, indignantly. "No'fulk's way off yander. I'll be gwine er lot ob days, I 'spec."

"Yo' will, eh?" nudging Juba in the ribs. "Why moughtn't we jog 'long togedder er bit, den? What say, Cap'n?"

"All right; I'm 'greecable," promptly assented Juba, who, tired of his own society already, was quite willing for almost any kind of companionship. Besides, ragged as George Washington Lupkins looked, for that was the euphonious name of his new acquaintance, Juba did not think he would find him uncongenial as a comrade. Nor was he mistaken. One was as full of mischief and frolic as the other.

A flock of geese, placidly swimming on the mill-pond, was their first victim. They succeeded in stoning the birds so close to the flood-gates, that two or three of the feeblest were drawn by the current down among the clanking, grinding wheels. Their next prank was to madden a belligerent ram, until, frantic with rage, he came near cracking his frontal bone, butting against the sharp angle of the fence, from behind which they were tantalizing him. At last, however, they met their match. It was quite late in the evening when they came upon a motherly old cow, quietly munching her cud in a meadow, and began to torment her in various ways. She bore it, at first, with quiet contempt; but when they began to be too presumptuous, she suddenly turned on them. George Washington dropped the rail with which he had been punching her, and scaled the fence like a monkey. Juba was not so fortunate. One of his luckless coat-tails got entangled in a bramble, and was torn half off in his effort to escape. The check was but momentary, yet it was sufficient. His enraged pursuer overtook him, her head went down, her horns caught him, and he was pitched over the fence, into a puddle, almost before he knew it. As he plunged headforemost down into the pool, the white plume of his cap disappeared beneath the green scum, like that of another Curtius precipitated into the gulf.

Alas! for his glory, when he emerged, a moment after, dripping and defiled with mire. If the boy's pride and feelings were hurt by his downfall, how much more did they suffer after he and George Washington had turned the coat about to find it pretty much in the plight of Bo-peep's lost sheep. But, when the martial cap had been fished out of the puddle, and lay

at Juba's feet in limp forlornness, he sat weakly down, staring at the wreck disconsolately.

“I mought ez well turn roun' an' go back ter Aunt Hanner,” he whimpered. “Wi' dese yere rej'mentals sp'iled teetotalum, 'tain't no use in gwine on, ez I kin see, fur nobody wouldn't look at me widout de brass buttons.”

“Cracky-my-crinky, Juba!” interrupted George Washington, consolingly. “De clo'es ain't sp'iled pas' fixin'. Whack off dis udder tail ob de coat, ah' dar yo' is, wid er roun'-about, same'z de nex' sojer. Juny bug! but Mist'ss Cow did souse yo' well, dat's a fac'. But ef yo' don't like de clo'es now, er fine gemman an' Cap'n like yo' is boun' fur ter hab money plenty. Ef yo' hain't los' dat in de ma'sh, 'twill be easy ter buy 'em at No'fulk, Va'ginny.”

Aghast at the possibility of having lost his secreted store, Juba promptly stooped to feel in his boot-leg.

His new friend watched him anxiously.

“It's O K, ain't it?” he questioned, as Juba finished his inspection with a sigh of relief.

Juba nodded. “When er feller's only got er little, he don't nebber lose much,” he answered, warily.

“'Specialum when he hides what he's got in his boot-leg,” said George Washington. “But see yere, frien', at dis plume ob yo' hat, will yo'? It looks like de longes' tail-fedder ob er rooster arter er wet day in de barnyard, don't it? Let's wash it off an' let it dry.”

By the time this delicate piece of laundry-work was accomplished, it began to grow dusk. Juba, sick at heart, would gladly have turned back, but for the gibes of his new friend, and, possibly, for a secret fear of what would follow from the ruin of Daddy Israel's treasured regimentals.

Secretly brushing a tear or two from the tip of his nose, therefore, he followed slowly after George Washington. But the two were not the blithe companions they had been before. Juba's homesick longings went on increasing; and it was with a sinking spirit that he saw the twilight darkening the sky.

“It's mos' 'bout time ter t'ink ob turnin' in somewhar fur de night, ain't it?” questioned George Washington. “What say ter bunkin' in de lof' ob dat farm-stable yander?”

“Anywhar, so'z I kin pull off my boots,” eagerly assented Juba, who was limping along painfully: for the boots were so soaked, and his feet so swollen and blistered, that he could hardly walk. It was only by the united efforts of himself and George Washington that the boots were finally drawn off. Then Juba sat down ruefully in the hay-mow, to soothe his aching toes by

gently drying and rubbing them with wisps of the mellow hay stowed in the loft.

For a time, George Washington exerted himself to cheer up the drooping spirit of his discomfited comrade; but it proved dull work to crack jokes to the music of Juba's dolorous sniffles; so he stopped talking by-and-bye, and, curling himself up in a hollow of sweet-scented hay, was soon fast asleep.

Even Juba's miseries were overcome later by the fatigues of his long tramp. So, after creeping out of the wet regimentals, to slink crestfallen into the despised tow-linen once more, he made ready to follow George Washington's example. First, however, he bethought himself of the treasure hidden in his boot-leg. For safety, he would have drawn on the boots to sleep in; but he found that the mere effort to thrust his swollen toes into them gave him too much pain: so, with a twist of hay, he rolled them into a pillow for his head; and spreading out the luckless regimentals alongside of him to dry, he crept under his covering of faded clover-blooms, and was speedily unconscious of all his woes.

He must have slept soundly: for he was only aroused by the sun poking one of his long yellow fingers into his sleep-weighted eyes. He stretched himself, then yawned, raised himself up on his elbow, and, rubbing his eyes, stared about the small hay-loft.

Why, where had George Washington Lupkins taken himself to? And the regimentals—had they walked off, also? And “Gunny muggles!” digging vigorously into his hay pillow: where were his boots, and the shining dollars that he had hidden in their secret pockets? Poor Juba! they were gone. Stunned by the sudden sense of loss, he sank back again into his warm bed, speechless.

But, after awhile, he was roused to renewed life by the sound of voices in the stable-yard below. Surely there was something familiar in the tones of one of the speakers. Quaking at heart, the runaway crept to a crevice, and looked cautiously down.

At the same instant, “Ole Uncle Isrul,” sitting astride of “Buck,” the long-eared spindle-legged mule, which Juba knew only too well, looked up. His eyes, and the eyes of the culprit, met.

“Ez I wuz sayin', sah,” the old man placidly continued, to the red-headed man who was evidently the owner of the stable, “ez I wuz remarkin': ‘A rollin' stone gadders no moss.’ My ole woman Hanner sets er mons'rous store by dat boy; an' ez fur me, I sets er mons'rous store by dem rej'mentals my young mars'er gib me, nigh t'irty year ago. I 'specs ef we wuz

ter look in dat lof' now, we mought fin' de boy—
an' de clo'es, too."

But there was no need for the search proposed:
for Juba, having screwed up his courage to confess all, slipped down the ladder, into full view of the patriarch.

"Ez I wuz sayin'," remarked that worthy, slyly winking at Juba, "yo' mammy sets er mons'rous store by yo', boy. So git yo' bundle, an' come

'long, chile. Me an' Buck hain't got no time ter waste in pleasure-'scurshuns 'bout de country."

It was not a propitious time for confessions. But if Juba's ride home behind Daddy Israel was one of somewhat painful discomfort, that morning, it is at least safe to suppose that it was nothing to the reckoning which he had to make with Aunt Hannah, when he got home. Juba remembers that reckoning to this day.

THE WHITE ROSE.

BY CLINTON SCOLLARD.

AN! she looked so strange and sad that night,
By the rosebush slim and tall,
Away from the blaze and glare of light
In the shadow by the wall;
And I stood and watched her, wan and white,
Through the music's rise and fall.

I wondered what could have caused the frown
To lurk on her fair young brow,
And the happy look in her eyes of brown
To seem so sorrowful now;
And I thought I saw her face cast down
Like a nun that breathes a vow.

The dancers paused; I stole to her side,
And my heart within me stirred
With a quick glad throb of conscious pride
At her smiling welcome word:
The laughter about us rose and died,
But her voice was all I heard.

Then they played a joyous wild refrain—
A waltz that was swift and sweet.
The warm blood swirled to my wildered brain
As our glances chanced to meet;
I saw her flush as we danced—we twain—
To the melody's rhythmic beat.

But the music ceased, and afar we strayed
To a shadowy flower-filled room,
Where a tinkling fountain plashed and played
Like a faint chime in the gloom:
And we sat in a bower that the leafage made
'Mong the fairest flowers in bloom.

Ah, me! the charm of the odorous air,
Of the hour and time and place!
She plucked a rose from her glossy hair,
As white as her milk-white lace,
And gave it me. Like a saint's in prayer
Was her lovely lily face.

Then I thought I heard the violins moan,
Like the wind that walls and blows,
And I looked and saw the leaves had blown
From the stem of my soft white rose:
She heard and saw, for she sat like stone,
As wan as the drifted snows.

She laughed no more when her eyes met mine,
And few were the words she said;
My heart, o'erbrimming with love's sweet wine,
Grew icy with fear and dread:
Ere the sun next morn kissed the mourning pine,
She lay like the white rose—dead.

MY ROSE-GARDEN.

BY MINNIE IRVING.

THIS wild rose-garden of mine—
Come enter it, you who will;
The sunbeams over it shine,
And on every tangled vine
The dew is glistening still.

Here, crimson-petaled, unfold
The richest roses of love;
Though sprung from the dark earth-mold,
There gleams in each heart of gold
The light of the sun above.

Here, pale with his frosty breath,
In a nook where the spider weaves,

Blossoms the rose of death:
Like a white soul bursting its sheath,
Or a dove asleep in the leaves.

Here are buds for the maiden's breast,
Blushing because they unclose;
And thornier than the rest,
With last night's dews oppressed,
The poet's golden rose.

I have planted this garden of bloom,
So that, when I am dead,
Each wind that brings the perfume
Of the roses over my tomb
Their fragrant petals may shed.

EDITH'S LOVER.

BY E. WARDE HASTINGS.

"Be sure not to get the ribbon, unless it is a perfect match; just five and a half yards, one-fourth of an inch wide. And don't forget the fan!"

These words were called out in a vigorous feminine voice, with a little imperious ring in it, that spoke volumes as to the character of the person who uttered them.

May Edgerton, to whom they were addressed, ran lightly out of the gate, and, with a more sedate step, walked down the street.

What a beautiful morning it was, she thought, as she smoothed down the soft brown fur of her winter suit. And how happy she was! for to-night, Thanksgiving Eve, the party given by the Wardes was to come off: the first grown-up party she had ever been to; and at this very moment she was on her way down-town to make various small purchases for the eventful night—purchases very insignificant, probably, to most people, but, to her, pregnant with all sorts of vague delightful possibilities. She would get the loveliest big bunch of red roses, if only her funds held out. They had some at Bradley's that she had been longing for ever since week before last. Very pretty May Edgerton looked, as she tripped down street with a gladsome light in her eyes. Very pretty she looked, thought all the passers-by as they noticed her tingling cheeks, her soft wind-blown hair, and her smiling mouth.

But here was Bradley's, and it was really quite full of people. The whole feminine world seemed to be out shopping. There was much pretty indecision and wrangling going on over the counter. Was this lace quite fine enough? Would this ribbon be a perfect match? Would not this be more becoming, if it were of a paler tint? May reached the flower-counter at last. There was the identical bunch of roses; but their price exceeded what she could spare. With a wistful look at the crimson half-blown buds, she turned away; but only to encounter a pair of kindly brown eyes bent on her intently. She blushed, and, in her confusion, dropped one of her packages. The owner of the eyes picked it up and handed it to her, and, in response to May's murmur of thanks, touched his hat in a gentlemanly and respectful manner. May walked along very rapidly, her face tingling with mortification at finding herself so upset merely by a pair of

brown eyes. She was already half-way home, when she remembered Edith's fan. There was nothing to do about it but to turn back. The fan fortunately was mended; so, taking it up, May started for home once more.

Just as she approached the door, Belle Somers, a neighbor of the Edgertons, came along. With her were two gentlemen, one of whom it did not take May long to see was the owner of the brown eyes which she had seen at Bradley's.

"Oh! I am so glad we met you, May," cried Belle, effusively. "Let me introduce my cousin, Mr. Ralph Somers, and his friend, Mr. Philip Dinsmore, from L—. Miss May Edgerton."

"But you did not finish that story you were telling me," said Belle, as soon as the introduction was over, "about some pretty girl you met. Mr. Dinsmore," addressing May, with a half-satirical glance at the gentleman, "really seems to think there are pretty girls in Alton."

Dinsmore, man of the world though he was, looked confused; and May, confident it was of her he had been speaking, blushed furiously.

Belle, seeing there was something wrong, interposed, with her usual tact.

Dinsmore, too, rallied, and pretended it was a little incident that had occurred on the train. He told the story well. How tall he was! this graceful easy gentleman of the world, thought May, as she glanced shyly at him; and what a wonderful self-possession, to escape so easily from his dilemma. There was a certain undefinable air of good-breeding about him, moreover, which could not but be felt. A quiet sense of humor lurked in the corners of his mouth, which was not contradicted by the smiling brown eyes. By the time he had finished his story, they had reached the Edgertons' gate.

"Is Edith going to be at home this afternoon?" asked Belle, as they paused.

"Yes, I believe so," said May.

"Because," she went on, "I would like to bring these two gentlemen over to be entertained, as I have an engagement at the dressmaker's, which, you know, is always imperative." And she gave a bright little laugh.

A few hours later, the two gentlemen made their appearance at the Edgerton cottage. It seemed that Dinsmore had spent some years traveling in Europe, and, in response to Edith's

questions—for Edith appropriated him at once—he told, in easy rambling style, of the people he had met, and the countries he had visited—varied now and then with some droll incident that had occurred in his own experience.

When Belle at last returned, she found them in a perfect gale of merriment.

A few hours later, the two sisters were up in their pretty room, engaged in the all-important occupation of dressing. Mrs. Edgerton was there. She was suffering from a neuralgic headache, to frequent attacks of which she was subject.

"Mother dear," said Edith, "do go and lie down. You really are not fit to be up."

"But, my dear, you will be sure to need me before you get through," said the mother. "Ah, who can that be, I wonder?" For there was a loud knock at the front-door, heard all over the house.

"Mrs. Willoughby surely would not come so early," said Edith, with her mouth full of pins. For, in consequence of Mrs. Edgerton's neuralgia, Mrs. Willoughby was to chaperone the two girls.

Suddenly May heard Edith exclaim: "Oh, how lovely! Who brought them?" And, looking up, she saw a big bunch of jacqueminot roses in her mother's hands, which the housemaid had just brought in.

"They are for May, the girl says," remarked Mrs. Edgerton.

Edith gave a look of skeptical surprise, first at the flowers, then at her sister.

May drew a deep breath of incredulous delight.

"How strange! It must be some mistake," she said, as she put her face down among the cool petals and inhaled their fragrance. But there was a card with her name written out legibly on it—"Miss May Edgerton." And then so presumptuous a thought came into her head that she banished it immediately.

"What are you blushing about, May?" said Edith, in a tone that was not wholly sweet-tempered.

"It is the reflection of the roses, probably," said Mrs. Edgerton, smiling in spite of herself.

"There—is that the right place?" queried Edith, as she stood on tiptoe, that she might the better arrange a glittering dagger in the dark high coils of her hair.

The pretty piquant attitude would have made a study for an artist. Her heavy white silk fell in loose classic folds about her well-shaped form, with only a little filmy lace here and there, and a bunch of dull-golden buttercups, to relieve the dead white. The square train and high-heeled slippers added a quaint richness to the whole that was very charming. On the bureau were

thrown the long loose-wristed tan gloves, which were to complete her toilette. The gown had been Mrs. Edgerton's wedding-dress. Originally it had consisted of the silk, with a delicate tulle-like texture over it. Out of this latter, May's dress for the evening had been fashioned, so that the wedding-dress made two dresses now. May's was very fluffy and airy in appearance, and with only the great bunch of crimson half-blown roses caught in the folds, May was quite as sweet and bewitching as Edith was stately and beautiful.

It was not long before the door-bell announced the carriage of Mrs. Willoughby. Ten minutes later found them in the ladies' dressing-room at the Warde mansion. Here, girls—pretty and ugly, tall and petite, stylish and plain, dignified and pert—were all plunged in one grand maelstrom of small-talk, clamor, and the arts of the dressing-table, "nameless now and forevermore."

"Don't my sleeves look as though they were too tight?" queried one fair damsel at the mirror, who was skillfully doctoring the pink tip of her saucy nose with the powder-puff. "No, they fit beautifully," replied a girl in pink, who was putting on her slippers—a rather arduous task, for she was encumbered with more than the usual *embonpoint*. "But do you know that I actually came off and forgot my fan; ain't that too bad?" "You can have mine whenever you want it," said an obliging young lady, seated on the bed; "I'm not going to dance much to-night, and so will not need it." "Oh, thank you! You are the dearest girl on earth. It will go beautifully with my pink dress, too." "How high your hair is dressed," remarked another, to a young lady whose head was arranged a-la-Pompadour, and was white with powder. So marvelously intricate were the coils and convolutions of this extraordinary head-gear, that everyone noticed it at once. "Oh, yes!" she replied, "Cousin Clara writes me from New York that no one thinks of wearing her hair down now; they all wear it up high." "Yes, it is really worse than the stock market, the way it goes up and down," said Edith, smiling. Then she caught sight of May's face, and in a few minutes they had both joined Mrs. Willoughby, and were paying their respects to their hostess.

The music soon struck up a waltz, and Ralph Somers carried off Edith, while May was left to the tender mercies of a ministerial-looking youth, by the name of Brown, whose hair was very light, whose neck was very long, and whose ears were very large. He aspired to learn how to dance; and after deprecatingly disclaiming all knowledge of the Terpsichorean art, he surprised May by asking her to try this one. She obligingly consented, but with some misgivings.

These were fully realized; for, after certain remarkable contortions of his body, which excited much mortification on May's part, and pity on the part of the bystanders, after many jostlings and collisions, after many silent and strong imprecations in the hearts of the other dancers, May had to sink down exhausted in a chair, while the young man by the name of Brown, with the long neck, the ministerial bearing, and the gamboling legs, after wiping his perspiring brow, seized her fan, and produced a small but devastating tornado in her neighborhood, causing quite a panic among certain young ladies, who stood in constant dread of discomposing their bangs, some of whom fled for their lives—that is to say, for their frizzes. Just at that moment, Belle Somers and Mr. Dinsmore floated past, while May looked ready to cry with vexation. The music ceased, and Mr. Dinsmore and Belle walked towards a vacant chair near her. Belle actually began a conversation with the jashful young man by the name of Brown; while Dinsmore, after a few general remarks, came up and asked May for the next dance. Her face flushed with pleasure as she gave it to him, for she was passionately fond of dancing. Partners now poured in fast. "Miss May, won't you give me the next quadrille?" asked one gilded youth; while another demanded "the fourth dance from this." "And I want the second polka on the programme," chimed in another tall stripling. She was surrounded by quite a bevy of youthful admirers, eagerly solicitous as to the state of her programme; and, woman-like, she was happy. She only wished they were not quite so young, and that certain of them could boast something more tangible in the shape of a mustache—one dark and heavy, like Mr. Dinsmore's, for instance.

That gentleman, meanwhile, was resting his manly form against a pillar, watching, with an amused smile, May's pretty little gestures. She was very happy, and very much excited. Her eyes sparkled, her cheeks were flushed, her hair was a trifle disordered: but it was not unbecoming, thought Philip Dinsmore. It would only be a little while, he thought, before she would lose all this charming freshness. But now she was as artless and lovable as it was possible for a young girl of eighteen to be. The lace had fallen down about her throat, and revealed the soft tempting curves there. And what a sweet mouth she had. It had always been one of Philip Dinsmore's theories, that more could be told from the expression of a person's mouth than from any other feature except the eyes. Then what a bewitching little turn that was which she gave her head, just then: it was so indescribably *naïve*. She was as unlike her sister Edith as sunshine is to fire-

light. This reminded him that he had not asked Edith yet for a dance. So, sauntering off, he idly went in search of her. But no: her programme was full. He was really disappointed, and staid by her side till the music struck up, and his turn came to dance with May.

Among his many accomplishments he was a good dancer, and he was pleased to find that he had an excellent partner in May. As for May, she was in the seventh heaven of bliss; and when the music ceased, and he said: "Why, Miss May, you dance quite divinely," her rapture was complete. Then he asked her if she did not have one or two dances left that she could give him. "Yes, there were just three." "Could he have them all?" "Certainly, if he wanted them." Dinsmore smiled down into the sweet eyes of his unsophisticated little friend. Secretly, he knew that he had done wrong to ask for all three, for May would probably get a maternal lecture in consequence, the next morning. Still, he could not feel sorry. Then he told her how disappointed he had been to find that Edith's programme was full. "Your sister is very beautiful and very clever," he said, which remark caused May to look thoughtful for fully two minutes. "He is in love with Edith," she said.

"Those flowers of yours are exceedingly fragrant," he next ventured to say, glancing at the roses in her belt.

"Yes, I received them this evening, just before I came; and I cannot imagine who sent them."

"That is very strange. I gave young ladies credit for greater powers of intuition than that," he answered, laughing. And May was quite satisfied, from his tone, that he knew nothing about them. Shall we own that she was also disappointed—so disappointed, she could almost have cried?

They sauntered to a sofa, half hidden by the ample folds of a portiere, that separated them from a deep recess, in which Edith was holding her court; and the gay voices of herself and her admirers were distinctly audible to May and Dinsmore, where they were seated.

"I always was a great admirer of L—s," said a masculine voice, and the name of an actress was mentioned: a woman famed alike for her beauty and for her power to break men's hearts. "She is too tall, for my taste," laconically observed a deep basso.

"You have not good taste, then," said Edith, with a little laugh; "for her admirers claim that she is just the height of the Venus of Milo, I believe."

"But not so armless, if I may drop the aspirate in saying it," broke in Ralph, as with unabashed

demeanor he stood lazily resting his huge shoulders against a cabinet of *bric-a-brac*, and looking down at Edith.

"That graceless wretch of a friend of mine looks as mildly innocent as though he had not perpetrated the most atrocious pun of the evening," said Dinsmore, in a low tone, to May. "He has a deplorable weakness in that direction; but I was in hopes he would not visit it upon his friends, to-night," and he shook his head dolefully. May was thinking of an evening not long since passed, when Edith had expressed in very strong terms her sentiments with respect to puns. "It is very undignified indeed," she had said. "It is contrary to all the laws of good-breeding, and in my opinion no gentleman will permit himself to fall into so loose and vulgar a habit." And her flushed face and firmly-compressed lips gave satisfactory evidence as to the vehemence of her feelings. May smiled now as she recalled these words. She could in imagination see the mild look of shocked surprise on Edith's handsome face. "It is too bad," she thought, "for otherwise he is so nice."

Dinsmore seemed, as if by instinct, to divine May's thoughts. "I should think," he said, "your sister would hardly tolerate Ralph after this. She is worthy of something better." And again there was a keen pain at May's heart.

Was it incipient jealousy? Poor child! if it was, she was too young quite to understand.

The remainder of the evening was a whirl of dancing; confidential *tête-à-têtes*; compliments, broad and delicate, whispered low by manly voices; nice little gossiping chats with young lady friends; various flights to the dressing-room, to assist in certain necessary renovations of the toilette; then the reluctant good-nights; and finally the rolling away of carriages filled with sleepy damsels.

Mr. Philip Dinsmore and Mr. Ralph Somers did not return to L— immediately. Some private theatricals were in progress for the holidays, and they were persuaded to take part in them. Even when they did return, they found they would be compelled to come down frequently to attend the rehearsals. All this time, the Edgertons saw a great deal of the two gentlemen. Then Edith departed for L— on a long visit to an aunt who resided there. After this, Mr. Somers and Mr. Dinsmore came less frequently to Alton. They were, however, to spend the holidays there; for it was then that the thrilling, much-talked-of, long-awaited-for play of "The Cousins" was to come off. The social world of Alton had worked itself into quite a ferment over this play. The part of leading gentleman had been imposed on Mr.

Dinsmore, for he was famous as an amateur actor. Ralph Somers had to be content with the less important place of valet to "my lord." But as this part did not require much study, he did not have to come so often to Alton for rehearsal. May was to play the part of milkmaid. Meantime, Edith was constantly writing that often she saw Dinsmore and Somers, always speaking more of the former than of the latter. And May's heart grew more and more sore.

It was Thursday. That night the last rehearsal was to come off. Edith, too, was expected home on the evening train.

May was busy sewing some frills of gold lace on a page's coat, which must be in readiness for that evening's rehearsal. Mrs. Edgerton had been invited out to tea, so May was all alone. A roaring fire had been built in the fireplace. May, near by, half buried in the depths of a huge arm-chair, was straining her pretty eyes over her work: for daylight was almost gone. The fitful gleams of firelight cast long lengthening shadows across the floor, lighting up here a crimson table-cover, there the engraving of a sweet child's face that hung on the wall. Suddenly a step was heard on the crisp snow outside. The door-bell rang, and a visitor entered.

"Why, is it you, Mr. Dinsmore," cried May, "or your ghost? I did not know you were in town. Pray, when did you come?"

"I came down this morning, for the rehearsal," said Dinsmore; "and immediately on my arrival, I fell into a hornet's-nest: for, over at Miss Somers's, there are some dozen ladies assembled, all trying to see who can sew and talk the fastest. They immediately began sending me on errands. And on errands I have been running ever since—indeed, I am on one now—a double one, in fact; and I am beginning to be of the opinion that, like the much-abused small boy, I 'am not wanted'."

"If you have come for my page's coat, it is not half finished—so you will have to wait," said May, smiling.

"That will not be hard. Pray do not be in any hurry about it. I think I could survive it if it were not finished before the rehearsal."

He stood looking earnestly at her. The firelight flickered on the soft gray of her dress; on the pretty little hand; on the rounded wrist and arm; and on the shining brown hair, that rippled, and swelled, and fell in little curls, about the soft white throat. But Philip Dinsmore did not see these; he saw only the lines of the sweet, sweet mouth.

Slowly May, as though impelled against her will by the strong still magnetism of his gaze,

lifted her eyes to his. The look made her dizzy with happiness. What could it mean? Had she been deceived? Was he not in love with Edith, after all, but with—with—

"My darling," he interrupted, "you know that I love you better than all the world."

"I—I thought you liked Edith."

For answer, he stooped down, drew her to him, and covered her face with kisses.

"She will make a most charming sister-in-law," he said. "But, May—here: look in my eyes, and tell me truly—you did not think so, really?"

"Y—yes," said May, a little doubtfully, and with flushed face, "I think I did. She is so much handsomer and brighter than I am."

"You dear little goose," said Dinsmore, "you are a thousand times prettier and brighter than Edith." And May, strange to say, took no offense at being called a "dear little goose," but was all the happier for it.

If, at the rehearsal that evening, "my lord" and the milkmaid conversed together more than some of the young ladies of Alton thought in accordance with the rules of propriety—at least as laid down by Alton blue laws—nothing important was said about it, for everybody was too busy with his or her part. Before the rehearsal was over, Edith made her appearance. Everybody asked so many questions, and had so much to say to her, that finally she was assigned the part of dressing-maid in chief, when the rehearsal continued smoothly once more.

At eleven-thirty that night, the two sisters were alone together, in their cosy bed-room; but they were both strangely subdued and quiet, considering that they had been so long separated.

"Edith," suddenly began May, as she nervously tried to untie a knot of ribbon. She was feeling dreadfully guilty. What would Edith think when she knew that her lover had been stolen from her?

"Well, what is it, sister mine?" said Edith, encouragingly.

"I—I have something to tell you," stammered May, still twitching at the knot. Edith turned toward her sister, and, taking both hands in her own, looked into the flushed face, and said:

"What is it, May?"

"Mr. Dinsmore has asked me to marry him," she answered, looking anxiously up into Edith's clear eyes.

"I am not surprised; I thought perhaps it was coming," said Edith, with a calm smile.

"Oh, Edith, how could you? And do you know, Edith, I thought you liked Mr. Dinsmore, and that—he liked you?"

"Why, you dear little innocent," and Edith kissed her sister's upturned face.

"You always wrote more about Mr. Dinsmore, though," faltered May, "than about Mr. Somers."

"As if a girl ever wrote about the man she loved," interrupted Edith. "That ought to have been enough. Listen. I also have had an offer."

"From Mr. Ralph Somers?" queried May.

"Yes!" said Edith, with a slight blush.

"I always thought he liked you," cried May, triumphantly; "but I supposed you'd never accept him. He makes such dreadful puns, you know."

"Y—yes," stammered Edith. "But, May, I think I will accept him."

"Why, Edith!"

For answer, Edith only cried, which was such an unusual occurrence that May cried too.

"Now, May," said Edith, wiping her eyes, "both our engagements can be announced on the same day. Isn't it odd?"

May looked at her, with her head on one side.

"Edith," she said, gravely, "I shall never rely upon your judgment and good taste again. You are the most inconsistent person living. For here you, Edith Edgerton, have always expressed the utmost abhorrence of puns, and now you are going to marry the very worst punster of all our acquaintance."

TRUE AS THE CHANGELESS STARS.

BY F. F. HALE.

We have plighted our vows of love,
And the solemn pledge is given,
And the angel of our lives
Hath written those words in heaven.
We may not know the fate
The future years shall bring,
But we need not fear the worst,
While to our love we cling.

Our hearts and our lives are joined
With a bond so strong and sure,
Let fate be dark or fair,
It will for aye endure.
For, true as the changeless stars
That span the arch of night,
Our love, so warm and pure,
Shall beam forever bright.

HER SEASON IN WASHINGTON.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

[Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1883, by Miss Ann Stephens, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington, D. C.]

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CHAPTER XIX.

THE ball of the barn, as people called that most original entertainment, was almost a disappointment to Amy Hale. Her sleep had been restless during all that was left of the night, and she awoke in the morning with a feeling of strange dissatisfaction. The splendor of that assembly came back upon her mind in a confused panorama of whirling life and endless commotion. The music seemed still ringing in her ears, but with jingling discordance. Her pretty white bed seemed to whirl and float, with all its lace draperies, like a snow-bank drifted by the wind. She almost fancied that the floor beneath it shook and trembled under the feet of many dancers. She closed her eyes, and felt as if rocking on an ocean of flowers that mingled their fading colors in weltering masses, while the sickly sweetness of their breath almost stifled her.

Brilliant but unsatisfactory as that entertainment had been, it opened a vista into the new world Amy had dreamed of so long. Her vivid imagination had hitherto thrown its glamor over scenes of fashionable life described to her, and gave them a glory that no reality could equal. She had not yet learned the delight which materialism can give to the commonplace mind, and perhaps never would: for even then her untutored nature rose to a higher ideal, and unconsciously she was looking forward to something vague and intangible that must happen beyond anything she had yet felt or seen in this new world.

After all, Amy was not a girl to content herself with the glitter and dash of a life entirely material. She was young, full of vital health, and gifted beyond her own knowledge or that of the reader. With her, the romance of life had lost nothing of its freshness, and perhaps never would, even in the life she was entering: for the poetry of romance will never be driven from the female heart, so long as to men and women love is the crown of human desire. Realism is an excellent excuse for want of genius; but it will never satisfy the God-gifted who can appreciate that one divine essence that lies

beyond the senses, and only uses them as instruments of expression.

Perhaps something like this, vague and unrecognized, lay at the bottom of Amy's disappointment; for it surprised herself—and she strove to sleep again, thinking that brighter thoughts would come when the sunshine broke through the window.

Young Moulthrop had whispered to Mrs. Norton that he should be at the cottage early that morning, and she had answered: "Come alone." In consequence of this little exchange of words, the young man was sitting in the daintily-furnished reception-room when his sister came down, not quite so elaborately costumed as usual, and with a scarlet shawl folded over a white cashmere wrapper that gave some evidence of wear.

"You wanted to see me—for something particular?" she said, addressing the young man rather discontentedly, but drawing him forward, and kissing his forehead with more emphasis than she usually gave to her caresses. "Something to find fault about, I suppose?"

"No. I only want a thing or two explained."

"Well?" said the lady, seating herself.

"First, have you been sincere with me in this arrangement about—"

Mrs. Norton moved her hand gently, and looked upward, as if to warn the young man that Amy's room was just overhead.

"Had you not better speak in French?—or I think she may have a little smattering of that—say Italian."

"In any language you like. Only, since last night, I have wished you understood but one," said the young man, with a touch of scorn.

"Since last night? May I ask why?"

"Because your exhibition, before so many people, was in very bad form, permit me to say."

"Did you think so? Still, I fancy some gentlemen quite as fastidious as yourself thought otherwise."

"That is quite another thing. They are not—"

"My brother," broke in the lady, with a swift glance, "remember, you are speaking English." Moulthrop instantly glided into Italian.

"We will let that subject rest; but I assure you that such ostentatious display of accomplishments, by no means confined to the upper-classes in Europe, is more likely to provoke question than to win admiration. Americans travel too generally in these days not to know that the languages are more necessary to the lady's-maid or courier, and quite as common, as they are to herself."

"I am sure you must be quite as good a judge of that as I am," answered the lady, with something as near sarcasm in her voice as she ever permitted herself to use.

The young man frowned, and arose from his chair. Mrs. Norton resumed her speech somewhat hurriedly.

"Sit down, sit down," she said, with a slight show of feeling. "I suppose you did not come here to give me a lesson in social science. What has gone wrong between you and the young lady? Something for which I am to blame, of course."

"No, nothing has gone wrong, except in my own sense of lost manliness."

A faint and softly-sneering smile came to the woman's lips.

"I do not understand," she said. "In what does your conscience accuse you?"

"Only in this—only in what I am compelled to conceal for your sake."

"For my sake? I thought our interests were the same."

"But your method of carrying them out—that is what troubles me. You do not explain—I feel myself led, rather than a free man. If the object I am pursuing is to be obtained by strategy, at least let me understand its limits."

"It is to be obtained by your ability to win a girl who, by great good fortune, has been led into your path before other influences could reach her: a girl who will possess a splendid dower and millions hereafter, but is just now ignorant of the fact, and expects to be loved for herself alone; for I have convinced that single-hearted egotistical old fellow that it would be ruinous to let her know of the wealth in store for her. You have a fair field with the girl, no chance as yet for dangerous rivals, and plenty and, so far as I can judge, a chance that comes to any man but once in a lifetime. I have given you this chance, and expect to share generously in its benefits. What is there in all this to depress or anger you?"

"Nothing, as you put it. But the father—what is your motive regarding him? The scene last night more than surprised me. One does not see such transparent acting without some repulsion, especially in—in—"

"A near relative. I understand that you may not quite like some few harmless things that one may now and then indulge in. It really is tiresome to be always on this high tide of intense respectability, and an opportunity of airing one's vanities to advantage sometimes allures the wisest of us into little indiscretions, such as have shocked you so terribly."

"They do shock me: all the more, because Norton will have just cause for offense."

A faint smile curled the lips of the lady: then a flash of fire came into her eyes, that were usually so well trained to one expression that they lacked the great charm of variety.

"If I accept the risk of offending Norton, it is in your own behalf. In order that you may stand well with the daughter, someone must hold a powerful influence with this shrewd but intensely vain man. If you fail with her, then—"

"What then?" demanded Moulthrop, eagerly.

"What then?"

"Hush! I hear Amy stirring, and breakfast is on the table."

As she spoke, Mrs. Norton hurried into the breakfast-room and closed the door. Immediately after, Mrs. Lane, the housekeeper, came in, looked around to make sure that the young man was quite alone, and went up to him, eagerly holding out both hands.

"Oh, my boy—my own dear boy! How glad I am! It seemed as if I never should see you alone. I have been on the watch every day, but got no chance. Now—now—"

The woman threw herself on the young man's bosom, and uttered a little cry of joy when his arms folded themselves closer and closer around her. His lips answered to the kisses she lavished upon his face, and her tears fell upon his bosom.

"I knew—I knew that my boy would never change. It was cruel to wait and wait, and get no sign; but I had faith in him all the time. She would not trust me—the foolish old heart would give way, and do a world of mischief, if I was allowed to go in and out when you were here, she said, just as it is doing now. It is only for a minute; but you have not forgotten me. You love the old woman—spite of everything. I knew it, I knew it—and told her so; but she thinks so wisely, and is so cold it freezes me. You are not like that: I can feel your heart beating faster and faster. These are tears on my cheek—yours or mine, I don't know; but this I do know: the kisses you gave me out of your little cradle were not more welcome than these. Not quite yet—hold me a minute longer; it will be something to remember years and years, if anything should take you away again."

Moulthrop held the old woman in a close embrace. If he had ever loved anything on earth, it was she. When she threw herself on his bosom, all that was tender and good in his nature rose to meet her. She was not wrong: the tears that mingled with her own on that sallow cheek fell from the dark lashes he pressed together in order to force them back; his lips trembled under the quivering kisses she pressed upon them. He answered her with soft endearing words, called her by a name she had thirsted to hear during months and years.

Then all at once she loosened her arms from his neck, rushed back, clasped it again, and stole away with heavy feet and drooping head, as if she had been stealing the one little handful of affection which was to satisfy the craving of her heart for days—perhaps years—to come.

Mrs. Norton and Amy were at the table when Moulthrop went into the breakfast-room. His face was a little flushed, and his dark lashes were heavy with moisture. The best part of his nature was aroused, and a look of gentle tenderness gave velvety softness to his eyes. Amy saw this, and a look of sympathy came over her own rather weary countenance.

Mrs. Norton understood the expression of the young man's face, and her own clouded; but when she saw the effect on Amy, the first pang of anxiety left her, and she went on to perform her duties as hostess with her usual elegant tranquility, when Miss Clarkson drove up to the door, in a small basket-carriage cushioned with crimson, and drawn by a stout white pony with flowing mane.

The lady jumped out of her carriage, flung her reins loosely across the pony's back, and ran up the steps. Before the servant could announce her, she was in the breakfast-room, had drawn a chair to the table, and was holding out her hand for a cup of coffee that Mrs. Norton poured out for her.

"Rather expected to find you at the table, and left my breakfast untasted; for we have got oceans of work to do, and only four days at the utmost to do it in. First and foremost, Mrs. Norton, can you spare your young friend here for a drive? I want to get a little acquainted with her before our plans are settled. The truth is, we want something better than any of us have yet attempted in the way of a new production, and an entirely fresh person to represent the good thing we may select. The truth is, our set is dying for a new sensation, and I mean that it shall have one. Another cup, if you please, Mrs. Norton. Now, Miss Hale, if you will run upstairs and put on the prettiest hat and wrap you happen to have, I shall be so much obliged."

Amy arose; the morning was beautiful, and nothing could be more tempting than that airy little equipage.

The moment she was gone, Miss Clarkson broke out, with eloquence that scarcely gave her time to breathe:

"Now I have settled on an entire new cast, and a play we are certain of. What do you say to 'Ingomar' to her 'Parthenia'? Ah, I thought you would like it—and she will look it beautifully."

"The very name of a play will frighten her," said Mrs. Norton.

"Why call it a play? She will only see her own part. Perhaps you noticed that I have avoided every theatrical term in my conversation. Pray follow my example, and we shall get on famously. She has seen school-exhibitions. Well, this is one, without the school. Just leave her to me—that's all."

Young Moulthrop seemed about to speak; but Amy returned just then, equipped for a drive, and Miss Clarkson hurried her away in smiling triumph.

Amy was far away from the half-drowsy state in which a few hours of restless sleep had left her. With the swift transitions of which youth is capable, she was now fully aroused to the beauty of that glorious autumnal morning, and drank in its invigorating air as tired men quaff wine. Her step seemed preparing for a waltz as she sprang into the basket-carriage, and made room for Miss Clarkson, who was untangling the reins from the maze in which her pony had tossed them. Young Moulthrop came running down the steps to help her; but she waved him back with a sweep of her arm, which was loosely covered by a long tan-colored glove, and leaping in after her captive, was rattling down the hill before he could protest against her inordinate haste.

"Now," she said, touching up her pony with a light flip of the lash, "we are in for a long ride and the cosiest sort of a chat. How do you like my pony? Isn't he a splendid goer?"

"He seems smart enough for anything," said Amy, whose hands trembled to get hold of the reins.

"Smart? I should think he was, the stout old darling. You shall see how he will rush us over the hills."

The lady was right; the active little creature seemed as full of vivacity as his owner, and cleared the ground famously, until he was drawn up on the southern shore of the Stockbridge Bowl, where a landscape of wonderful beauty presented itself, grand in its outlines and full of picturesque detail.

"There, now—what do you think of that?" demanded Miss Clarkson, triumphantly sweeping the horizon with her whip. "Just look around you."

Amy stood up in the carriage. Around her lay a noble amphitheatre, whose broken and unequal rim bounded the view ten miles or more away. A beautiful sheet of water sparkled and undulated in its depths, here in the yellow sunshine, there in the shadow, and hedged in by undulating hills, scattered over with farm-houses and fine country-seats, out of which the more important buildings and church-spires of Lenox took the form of a rural city. Above all this rose the craggy rocks and richly-wooded spurs of the Taghanic Mountains, bathed in the last dying colors of the year.

Familiar as Amy was with mountain scenery, this rare combination of culture and rude nature thrilled her with new delight; when she sat down her face was all aglow.

"It is beautiful. I caught a glimpse of it the other day; but then it was only one broad view—now it breaks into pictures. I shall remember them always."

"Ah!" exclaimed Miss Clarkson, "that is the second-sight of genius—out of all nature it takes what is needful, and combines it into something still more perfect."

Amy stared blankly at the speaker; she did not comprehend the meaning of her words, and said so.

Miss Clarkson laughed pleasantly. She was interested in the girl, as sharp critical women of the world are apt to be, when they chance to fall in with an honest bit of nature.

"Have you ever written anything?" she said.

"Oh, yes; plenty of letters."

"But stories?"

"Stories? No, indeed; I make them up in my mind sometimes, when I lie awake at night, or half asleep in the morning; but they fade away like dreams."

"Do you never try to write them out?"

Amy blushed crimson.

"I would not have anyone know it for the world. I did try once or twice; but they did not seem like the same thing on paper—besides, I was afraid grandmamma would find me out, and she objects to all stories but the Parables."

Miss Clarkson did not laugh at this primitive confession, but the effort she made to look serious was pretty martyrdom.

"Then this grandmamma of yours does not let you read stories, much less novels, I suppose?"

Again Amy's face flushed redly.

"I—I was sure it would hurt her feelings,

and never let her know all that the girls did in school."

"Then you did read?"

"I could not help it."

"Exactly: you were thirsty, and drank."

"Yes, it was like that; but some of the books we got disappointed me."

"Of course. They disappoint everybody but the men and women who write them, and who get their only popularity by praising each other."

"They neither make you laugh nor cry. You never are very much pleased or angry with them—only a little tired," said Amy, reflectively.

"I understand," said Miss Clarkson, making a little flirt of contempt with her whip: "you have stolen into the realistic school. We will turn down this cross-road—I have something to show you."

The turn Miss Clarkson had taken led down some steep hills toward the northern bank of the Bowl. She drew up near a bluff, on which stood a small red dwelling but one story high, which had doubtless been a farm-house once, but was modernized by green blinds and a long addition at the back.

"In that house," said Miss Clarkson, with a hush of reverence in her voice, "were written some of the finest books you will ever read. In that room, which commands a beautiful view of the lake and the mountains, Hawthorne wrote his 'House of the Seven Gables'."

Amy looked at the house with a feeling of awe that she had never experienced before. She had heard of Hawthorne; but to her it was a strange mysterious name, full of dreamy interest.

"Did he write poems?" she questioned.

"Every line of prose he ever wrote was full of poetry so fine that you never missed the rhythm—but you shall read his books: for I begin to think you could appreciate them. Tomorrow I will send you one."

"Oh, thank you!"

"Not at all. But now Wobbles must climb the hills again; we have taken him shamefully out of the way. Come, old fellow."

"Let us walk," said Amy, full of health and spirits.

"All right; it is no more than fair," was the lady's answer; and, slipping out of the carriage, she walked beside it, holding the reins loosely as she went, and talking cheerfully all the time on subjects that were most likely to draw the real nature of the young girl to the surface.

When they reached the new road which led westward, both ladies got into the carriage, and Wobbles, shaking out the white fringes of his mane, dashed, fresh as ever, to the base of Stock-

bridge Mountain, where they came in full view of Echo Lake, with its wildly-broken shores, its ferny nooks, its rock-walled caves, from which the pine-woods swept back in thick green masses, and over all loomed the grim fastnesses of the mountain, with mysterious echoes sleeping in their black depths.

Miss Clarkson drove as near as possible to a great boulder that overhung the eastern shore, over which a young tree, still aflame with autumnal frosts, flung its colors like the trail of a banner down upon the lake.

Here Miss Clarkson left Wobbles to his own devices, and, taking a narrow foot-path, came out upon the boulder, where she stood, with Amy by her side.

"I heard you humming a tune as we climbed the hills," she said, turning toward the girl. "Can you sing at all?"

"Sing? Not as you are accustomed to hear singing; but the music-teacher in school once said that I had a voice like a bird, if I would only try and cultivate it."

"But you never did?"

"Sometimes—just a little—in the meeting, and once—"

The girl stopped suddenly: a choking sensation was in her throat. She remembered those two happy, happy weeks when she had tried her voice with Hugh Maxwell, getting one song by heart as she gathered it from his lips, and repeated it in secret with her own.

That countenance, eloquent of every feeling that possessed her, betrayed the pang that had seized upon Amy to her companion, who, without seeming to observe the change, went on:

"But you have some one song by heart, I am quite sure. I should so like to hear your voice."

Miss Clarkson really had great curiosity to witness the effect an echo she knew must follow any attempt at singing would have upon this young mountain-girl, who had become an absolute study to her. It was not often that her critical intellect had a natural and impulsive nature like that to analyze.

Amy was not without powers of self-control. Miss Clarkson had been exceedingly kind to her, and she made an effort to conquer the tremor that had swept her nerves with a shock. Once or twice she attempted to steady her voice. At last it broke out, but with a cry of pain, as if uttered by some wounded bird; but the first anguish died out, and the notes of a simple little love-song came from her lips as naturally and sweetly as morning winds blow over the flowers.

The first verse had hardly escaped her lips when she caught her breath with a sudden gasp,

and stood motionless, as if turned to marble, with a white scared look upon her face, and absolute terror in her eyes. Note for note, sound for sound, the words she had sung came back to her from the sky—from the air—perhaps from the depths of the lake, or the bleak heart of the mountain—how could she tell? Oh! where was he hidden, that his own words had been flung back to her with such mocking cruelty?

"Do not be frightened. Do not let the sound trouble you so. It is only your own voice, echoed by the mountain. I meant a surprise—not to hurt you so."

Miss Clarkson spoke eagerly, and with genuine regret for her cruel experiment. The wild white face of the girl reproached her more than words could have done. She seized her by the arm, and shook her with kindly force, explaining, passionately:

"It is only an echo, I tell you—nothing else. That black old mountain always answers a human voice in this way. Listen: I will shout, and it will answer me:

"What, ho! up yonder, do you hear me?"

In a few moments, the answer came:

"What, ho! up yonder, do you hear me?"

Amy drew a deep breath: feature by feature, her face relaxed its tension. She tried to speak, but only gave sound to a faint hysterical laugh. Then she burst into tears.

"I—I thought that he—that someone was answering—mocking me," she said at last, in piteous bewilderment; "but it was only—"

"An echo—a harmless echo," Miss Clarkson protested, angry with herself, and getting out of patience with the girl. "Come, now: shall we go down to the carriage?"

Amy only answered her with a faint sob, and prepared to follow down the foot-path.

The pony had been solacing himself with some tender ferns and tufts of forest-grass that grew along the road, and thus refreshed for a dashing journey homeward, made good progress down the hills. Miss Clarkson spoke to him now and then, in an admonishing way; but Amy kept silent. The words of that song were still ringing through her mind.

"Down yonder," said Miss Clarkson, at length bethinking herself of the object she had at heart, "is the cottage Fanny Kemble once lived in. Would you like to see it?"

"Fanny Kemble? Wasn't she an actress or something?" answered the girl, suddenly arousing herself. "No, thank you; I do not care—that is, I would rather not."

"Because she was once an actress? Oh, now I remember: you have a prejudice against

the stage. But that has no relation to the entertainment we were speaking of, in which I have reserved a lovely character, just suited to you."

Amy shook her head.

"You have been to school-exhibitions?" continued Miss Clarkson, by no means dismayed.

"Oh, yes."

"And taken a part in them?"

"Yes, two or three times."

"Well, the entertainment we mean to give is the same thing, only on a grander scale. You have only to dress prettily, and speak your piece."

"Why, grandmamma herself never objected to that."

"Of course not—I suppose she was very proud of your performances."

Amy smiled.

"As your father will be now. Indeed, he has set his heart upon it."

"Then I will learn anything you please. It seemed to me, last night, as if he did not care so much about me since we came here."

"That was, perhaps, because you had been so positive. He naturally wants to see you admired."

"He did not seem to care, last night, about seeing anyone admired except—"

Here Amy broke off, biting her lips. Miss Clarkson smiled quietly, and went on, as if she had observed nothing:

"You disappointed him then—now he will be delighted. You have no idea what a pretty dress we have designed for you. That wonderfully handsome young man, who is to recite the part next to yours, insists that it shall be purely classical. He has high ideas of art."

"Young man—Mr. Moulthrop?" said Amy.

"Do you really think him so very handsome?"

"Handsome isn't the word, my dear—he is splendid. You will be wonderfully supported. There isn't a girl of our set who would not rejoice to take your place."

Amy's cheeks began to burn with the warm ambitious blood that was kindling in her veins. She rallied all her faculties to comprehend the part she was to perform. She asked questions, and received a description of the entertainment in which she was to hold a part, so vivid that her imagination took wing and she became absorbed by the subject. Thus, before she reached Mrs. Norton's cottage, the girl had thrown herself, heart and soul, into the drama which had been well masked under the specious name of an exhibition.

CHAPTER XX.

A sudden and dreary change had come upon the Berkshire Hills. The Indian summer had

plunged itself into a tempest of sleety rain, and after that, a fierce gusty wind swept the foliage from the trees in clouds of burning color, filling the air as with a storm of mammoth butterflies that fluttered down among the rocks, were drifted into hollows, and seemed to be dying upon the wet grass, with vain efforts to lift their wings and take flight again.

This change was a signal for the fashionable world to retreat into its city haunts, and was also an excellent reason why Miss Clarkson and her allies should urge their entertainment forward with renewed vigor. These private theatricals were to be the crowning glory of the season, and its leading spirit understood the value of novelty too well for any hesitation in pressing this fresh young mountain-girl into her service, no matter what friendly artifice was to be used. She had, with her own unsparing hands, cut down her copy of "Ingomar, the Barbarian" into a parlor-drama, out of which every character and scene not absolutely necessary to the story was cast aside, and nothing remained that did not throw force and embellishment on the two leading characters. She would not trust her adroit friend, Mrs. Winstead, to rehash the fine play into a modern absurdity, but made all the changes with her own hand, cutting out much, but only adding a word or a sentence here and there to make the connection complete; for she was far too clever to interpolate her own crude or commonplace nothings into a work of real genius. For all novelty, she depended on the freshness and talent of her two leading characters, and kept them both out of the way of gossip and prophecy with all the care an impresario bestows on a debutante from whom he has hopes of fame.

The lady had found in young Moulthrop an apt and most capable coadjutor. Endowed with superior talent and most delicate tact, he at once became an efficient tutor for Amy, and an adviser for herself.

One morning, after the storm, she came dashing up to the cottage, eager to forward matters there. Seeing young Moulthrop in the bay-window, she beckoned him down with her whip.

"Well," she said, as he reached the lower steps, "I drove up that you might report progress—haven't a minute to spare, for every hour is crowded with work. Now tell me—how is the young lady getting along? Are we safe from a disappointment there?"

"Disappointment? You need not think of it—she grasps our idea by intuition. Her study is quick, her powers of concentration wonderful. She has her part perfectly, and has thrown herself into it—heart and soul."

"Thanks to her teacher," said Miss Clarkson, with one of her most courteous bows.

"Thanks to her own fine talent. The character suits her; she requires no teaching from me."

"Indeed! Is it advanced so far as that?"

There was a merry twinkle in Miss Clarkson's eyes, under which the young man blushed; feeling the heat in his face, he was angry with it—for he had thought himself above such weakness.

Miss Clarkson turned away her eyes. With all her disregard of conventional restraints, she still had great respect for honest feeling.

"Well, I could not leave my pretty debutante in better hands," she said.

"I shall teach her nothing that can make her less worthy of your respect and my own," said the young man, gravely.

"Oh, you take things far too earnestly," said the lady, gathering up her reins. "Well, I have learned all the news you have to give, and it is satisfactory. Good-morning. Tell the people indoors that I haven't time to come in. Have to call at a dozen places before noon—haven't we, Wobbles?"

When Moulthrop went back into the little reception-room, where he had left Amy, she was sitting by the window, with the manuscript of her part held down on her lap with both hands. There, in the leaves of her part, she had come upon the little song that the young Englishman had taught her at the old homestead: the song that had been flung back to her in echoes across the lake. It came upon her there in the broken manuscript with a suddenness that fairly took away her breath.

The girl turned her face to the window, ashamed of the tears that trembled upon her lashes; but Moulthrop saw the flush that swept down to her neck, and went close to her.

"What is it?" he said, anxiously. "Anything too hard for you? Let me see."

Amy had laid the manuscript in her lap; but when the young man attempted to take it up, she made a faint effort to stop him, but his eyes had fallen on the lines:

"What love is: if thou wouldst be taught,
The heart must teach alone.
Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one."

Moulthrop read these lines in a low and slightly tremulous voice, that seemed to thrill Amy from head to foot. The young man paused, looked down upon her for a moment, and then went on:

"And whence comes love? The morning light,
It comes without a call;
And how dies love? A spirit bright,
Love never dies at all!"

"There is no more," said Amy, quickly; "it breaks off there."

"I know; but why is it that you find this so hard to learn?"

"It says that love never dies. Do you believe that? I do not. Love must die when it has nothing to live upon. When it has been treated with scorn—when you have mistaken it for something else—"

The girl spoke passionately: she was trembling with emotion. Moulthrop was surprised; he gazed on her earnestly. She felt the glance, and covered her face with both hands.

"Does this mean that you know what love is—you?" he said, with pain in his forced composure.

"Me? No, no—a thousand times no! It is only shame that I should be talking of such things. No girl can do that without feeling as if she had lost all pride. This comes of studying words that one could never speak—it seems so real!"

"Real? I only wish—"

Here the young man checked himself so abruptly that Amy looked up with questioning eyes.

"You are thinking ill of me. I have been so foolish."

"Ill of you? There, there—we are both astray from our subject. You were about to wreathe the drinking-cups; but we have no flowers. By-and-bye, we shall want a basket for the berries: that is about all the properties our characters demand."

"A basket? Oh! I have one—or—"

Again the girl flushed red. Then, with a sudden gesture of impatience, she muttered: "But why not—why not? It is the only use I can ever put them to. Surely I am not baby enough to keep them."

This was said under her breath; then she arose quite firmly, and going into the next room, brought out the pretty basket of woven and scented grasses which the young Englishman had given her at the old homestead. It was full of choicely-assorted leaves, which sent out a gleam, which would have answered well for that of ripe fruit by lamp-light.

"This will do famously," said Moulthrop, seizing upon the basket; "should flowers be lacking, you can garland the cups with these leaves. It will have a unique effect."

"No, no: do not touch them. I would much rather not," protested the girl, reaching out her hand in eager haste. "They are not suitable for anything of the kind."

Moulthrop gave up his hold on the basket, only

saying, gravely: “We are giving too much attention to the properties—now, if you please, let us go on with the rehearsal.”

Amy did go on, with such complete self-abandonment that all minor personalities were merged into the character she assumed.

Thus the rehearsals went on, bringing these two young people into intimate relations, that months of common friendship might have failed to establish, at a time when the imaginations and all the ardent impulses of youth and health were in active force.

Mrs. Norton saw this, and understood it with her usual forethought. The second object of her life, just then, was to foster the pleasant associations that had sprung up between these two young persons, and, so far as her subtle influence could go, to deepen them into an abiding attachment before the great wealth that lay behind it had become a matter of notoriety.

To this end, the house at Lenox had been taken and the young man sent for. To this end, the wealth which she knew Seth Hale to control had been kept a secret from his daughter and the society she appeared in, rather as the guest of a lady well established in the fashionable world than as the daughter of an independent gentleman. Mrs. Norton had found some difficulty in persuading Seth Hale to keep his attainment to the power of wealth a secret, and only succeeded in doing this by gentle sneers and pointed ridicule of the “bonanza kings,” as she was in the habit of calling those who made an ostentatious display of their good fortune. “Nothing,” she would say, “can be more vulgar than the position a man expects to make by his money alone. Surely, a member of Congress needs no such aid to define his standing in the world. Indeed, it is a disadvantage, since so many members of inferior ability have been known to buy their way into the very

Senate, with money that a chance dash of fortune has bestowed upon them. Surely, you, Mr. Hale, would hardly care to enter Congress with that kind of a reputation,” she would say, “or have your daughter sought after because of the wealth you can give her. This puts a girl at terrible disadvantage: for she must always be in doubt of the real attractions that bring men to her feet. It is enough that your daughter is well chaperoned and surrounded by all the elegant appliances of high-breeding. That she may hereafter be worth her millions should have no part in her establishment for life. Besides, you are a young man yet, and may not care to divide a noble fortune with any handsome adventurer who may happen to please an inexperienced girl like Amy.” All this Seth Hale listened to, not in lectures—Mrs. Norton was far too wise for that—but in little snatches of worldly talk, brought in just when they were calculated to make the most impression. There may have been other reasons why he was willing to keep the amount and nature of his wealth in the background; but certain it is, that all these admonitions made a deep impression on his inexperience, and instead of boasting of his good fortune, as he was disposed to do naturally, he maintained a reserve regarding it which thoroughly answered Mrs. Norton’s double purpose, which was that of establishing her own reputation for independence, and of keeping all other suitors in the background till Moulthrop had entirely ingratiated himself into favor with the young heiress. If Moulthrop had taken any share in this combination of female artifice and worldly wisdom, it had been before he saw the girl or dreamed of the deeper feelings she might inspire. Now he was scarcely conscious of the astute part his sister was practicing, and certainly took no interest in it.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

“THE BLIND SHALL SEE.”

BY MRS. LUCY M. BLINN.

Wait! Shall we touch the sleeping eyes
With the magic wand of a God-like power?
Shall we feast our hearts on the glad surprise
In her innocent face, in that fateful hour
When the orbs of light, now sealed, unclose,
Like the opening leaves of a folded rose?

Wait! Will the splendor of day’s delight,
And the bright-hued blossoms in sun and shade,
Shut out from her heart the dread of night—
Or comfort her heart when her roses fade?
Is it well to unclothe the wondering eyes
To a light that fades—to a bloom that dies?
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Wait! She will see each dear one’s face,
And their smiles will be tender, and warm, and true.
Alas! with the smiles and the gentle grace,
She must look on the tears and the shadows too!
Is it well to disturb her innocent dreams—
To teach her that life is not all that it seems?

Let there be light! Hear the sweet command
Of Him, as He spoke from Creation’s throne;
The trembling lids feel His gracious hand,
And a whisper comes in a gentle tone:
“You will waken the child, that her sight may prove
That shadows and light alike mean love!”

THE GREATEST IS CHARITY.

BY HELEN J. THORNTON.

"WELL, I think she's stuck up."

The speaker was a married lady, about thirty years of age. Her listener was a neighbor and friend, somewhat ten years older. The person alluded to was a comparatively new comer at Wilmothburgh—a young widow, said to be rich, and who had brought the best introductions.

"I'm not sure," was the answer, after a moment's thought.

"Think of the money she must spend on dress! Everything of the richest. Made, too, as one sees at a glance, by a real French milliner."

"But she is rich and can afford it."

"I am not sure," with a certain prim, self-righteous air, "that even the greatest wealth justifies us in spending so much on this frail, perishable body. Nothing but the most ridiculous vanity can explain a woman of her age dressing in that costly way."

"But, my dear, she can't be so very old. Not twenty-five, I should say. That is fifteen years younger than I am; and even I will not give in, as yet," with a smile, "to being old. She's handsome, also, and I must say that I can forgive any woman who is so pretty for loving pretty dresses. Indeed, it is quite a question with me whether all of us ought not, in justice to our mere sex, always try to appear in as attractive costumes as we can afford. I sometimes think that the desire to dress nicely is not vanity at all, but a really laudable feeling—a desire to please—a duty almost—"

"A duty?"

"Yes, when kept within bounds. But this is wandering from the subject. By-the-bye, I wonder if Mrs. Fontaine's ears do not burn? If everybody is talking of her as we have been this afternoon, they must feel like fire."

"I come back to what I've said. She's dreadfully stuck up; keeps herself almost entirely to the Howards, and Kingsleys, and Montgomerys, and that set; knows you, my dear, of course, a great deal better than she condescends to know me." This was said with quite a sniff.

"Well," said the other, looking up with a light laugh, "if I leave myself out of the question, I don't wonder. They are the brightest, as well as most cultivated families we have. And she seems very popular with them all, which speaks well for her accomplishments and character."

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"Fudge! It's only because they are the families of the professional men that she cultivates them so assiduously. She thinks it aristocratic. Then she's mean—mean, with all her wealth. I'm told she refused to subscribe to the Hindoo Mission the other day; and even said there were too many Hindoos at our own doors."

"Well, I don't wonder," said the other. "Let me tell you a little incident, apropos of that, and of what you call her meanness."

"But even if she wasn't enthusiastic about Hindoo missions, she is so rich that she might have spared something; one less of those extravagant dresses would have enabled her to do it, and she ought to defer a little to other people's opinions, lone widow as she is."

"What I am going to tell you," said the other, placidly going on with her netting, "I discovered in a half-confidential way, and therefore I do not feel I have a right to make it too public. If you had not spoken so severely of Mrs. Fontaine, if you were not, as I think, prejudiced against her, I should not tell you at all."

"Oh! if that's it," with something of a sneer, "I'm sure I don't want to intrude."

"Nonsense! I'm not going to let you be foolish, even if you will; it is due to Mrs. Fontaine, at least, to go on."

"Very well, then; I am all attention," but with some hauteur.

"I happen to know that Mrs. Fontaine gives away a very large proportion of her income; much more than the tithe spoken of in Scripture; and that it is spent under her own supervision, so that she is sure it is not wasted. Besides several nieces and nephews, whom she entirely supports and educates, she has kept no less than five young men for years, first at college, and then at the Theological Seminary, entirely at her own cost. The Bishop himself told me this when he was here with us."

As the Bishop was the brother of the speaker's husband, there could be, her hearer felt, no doubt on this point.

"Her charities are done, so to speak, in seclusion: her 'right hand knoweth not what her left hand doeth.' She does not give alms in the market-place."

"You are very enthusiastic about this pretty widow."

There was sarcasm in the tone, and the sarcasm would have been more pronounced if the guest had not been related to the Bishop, and a neighbor and acquaintance to be cultivated, on that account and others, socially.

"No; at least, not more than the truth demands."

"Well, I suppose we shall not see her for awhile. I have missed her pony-carriage for a week and more. She has gone to Saratoga, of course."

"Very far from it. That is the noble conduct I was coming to. You have heard, of course, of the terrible outbreak of typhus fever in the suburbs down by the canal, where the marshes are always more or less pestiferous."

"Yes; but I have hardly given it a second thought, for it is so far off there is no danger of infection."

Her guest looked at her keenly for a moment, but the other went on placidly sewing, apparently unconscious of the callousness of her remark. She said, at last:

"There is always more or less typhus there, for the people are very poor, only half fed, and the sanitary conditions are dreadful. But now it has assumed almost the dimensions of an epidemic. For a few days the doctors were in despair. Not half enough nurses could be got, and the poor wretches are dying simply from want of care."

"How very dreadful!"

For this picture roused even the selfish Mrs. Conway to a momentary regret.

"When Mrs. Fontaine heard of it, she offered at once to go down into the infected district and help to nurse. She had no children, she said, or other family, to be imperiled. So there she has been for the last ten days, and my brother-in-law, Dr. Price, says she is doing more good than he and all his brother doctors."

The sewing fell into Mrs. Conway's lap. She raised both hands in astonishment.

"You don't say," she cried. "How foolish! But after all," with some reluctance, "it was very brave. The last thing," taking up her seam and examining it, as if to avoid her neighbor's eye, "to be expected of a fashionable woman."

"But I have already told you that Mrs. Fontaine is not a fashionable woman. That is, she does not live for show, and society, and the gratification of her vanity, which is what I suppose you mean by a fashionable woman. I'm afraid, my dear Mrs. Conway," with a smile, "you are one of those who think, because a woman is rich and dresses well, and keeps a carriage, that she can't be good. Yet here is one of that very kind, risking her life, where I'm afraid I wouldn't risk mine, even had I had no little children to keep me back."

"I'm quite sure I would not, children or no children," promptly replied the other. "What's the life of one of those people, after all, worth in comparison with yours or mine, or even—"

"A life is a life. And life is as precious to a poor man as to a rich one. Nay, it is, in one sense, of greater importance, for the poor man is the bread-winner: if he dies, the family starves, or goes to the poor-house."

"Oh! that's too transcendental for me," half angrily retorted Mrs. Conway, for she felt that she had sunk in her companion's esteem. "For my part, I don't believe the very poor have our fine feelings. How can they? They don't suffer half as much, in the same circumstances, as we would."

"Well, I must be going," said the other, glancing up at the pretty French clock on the mantel-piece, and rising, for she saw further discussion was useless. "But I hope I have set you right about Mrs. Fontaine, at least. We are very apt to condemn others—I know that I am—too hastily. After all, my dear, St. Paul was correct when, speaking of the Christian virtues, he said, having this very fault in his mind, that **THE GREATEST WAS CHARITY.**"

JUNE AND DECEMBER

BY STERNIE GREY.

'NEATH the silver summer moon
Once we stood, love, you and I,
All our life's rare golden June
Drifting like a rose-leaf by;
"Sweet," you whispered low to me,
"Moons may wane and star-shine flee,
Through June glow and winter gloaming
I will still be true to thee."

Now the solemn winter moon
Bathes the earth in icy light,
And beneath the stars alone
Standing this December night,
Moons have waned and Junes have fled
With the vows you lightly said,
And the heart you won is breaking:
You are false, and joy is dead.

AS OLD AS THE HILLS.

BY FRANK LEE BENEDICT.

SHE came tripping on, among the daisies, with the free elastic step of a young Diana, bearing a large milk-jug in her arms—arms bare nearly to the shoulders—milk-white, and exquisitely moulded as those of a Greek statue. Rustic as her dress was, including a huge sun-bonnet that nearly hid her face, it was quite picturesque, and an artist at least would have raved about it. Her rich complexion, her dark-brown hair, her violet eyes that looked in the shadow black, the poise of her well-shaped head, a certain something in her face that told of character and decision, yet mixed with feminine sweetness and rare poetic forces that seemed only waiting to be woken to life: all these would have rendered Maida Hayden remarkable for beauty under any circumstances, but made her doubly so when seen, as now, in the early morning, with the dew fresh on the grass, and a color in her cheek and a light in her eyes, only rivaled by the bright sky overhead, and the young tender green of spring on everything around her. By her side trotted a pet cow—a beautiful high-bred little thing. The girl was singing as she went; and this was what she sang:

"I care for nobody—no, not I—
Nobody, nobody—no, not I."

Suddenly a step was heard behind her, and a voice called, gayly:

"How glad I am that I'm not 'nobody,' since you are inclined to be so hard on him. Good-morning. May I carry your pitcher?"

Maida started, turning her face around to behold a young man, so like the typical Italian in his appearance, that a stranger would never have believed his ancestors had inhabited New England, ever since the days of the Pilgrim Fathers.

"No," she said; "but you may lead Dapple. I am taking her to the home-pasture. Oh, yes," as he took the leading-line, "you are undoubtedly somebody; a very ill-conducted body, though, to appear in this unexpected fashion—good-morning. But, after all, I would advise you not to join me, for I am as cross as two sticks; and cross at you especially—"

She stopped suddenly, with a blush, beneath his ardent half-reproachful look.

"Is the mother vexed?" he asked, directly. "Is that it?"

"You know she never lets herself be vexed. I wish she would sometimes," sighed Maida. "She told me to come back from Mrs. Stanard's last night at eight o'clock, and it was past ten before I got home; and all your fault, too."

"The fault of the boys, rather," he said, "who had stolen the plank that made a bridge across Stanard's Creek, and forced us to walk all the way round by the village. Didn't you tell your mother so?"

"No; it would have been of no use: for Huldah crossed the bridge this morning, and mother knew it. So what would have been the good, Mr. Edgar Brayham? Appearances were too much against us."

"Some careful person must have put another plank down in the night, after we tried to cross in vain," said Brayham, with a wicked laugh, and a bold confession of guilt in his handsome eyes.

"You did it yourself. I am convinced now that you have chosen, at last, the profession for which you are suited. You'll certainly make a fair lawyer," said Maida.

The sarcasm in her voice was too playful for offense, however. But her hearer's conscience was active enough for her words to bring a wave of color to his olive cheek. He answered rather reproachfully, however.

"Do you mean to blame me, too," he said, "because I couldn't settle down in this dead-and-alive place, as my uncle wished—plant turnips, or stand behind a counter? And if I did make a blunder about teaching or being a doctor—"

"I never thought of such a thing," interrupted Maida. "Please—please don't quarrel with me this morning!"

"Quarrel? As if I could have the heart—oh, Maida!"

"Hush!" she exclaimed, nervously: for the eager tones revealed the dangerous avowals which hung on his lips.

"I know what ails your mother," he said, bending towards her, and speaking in a repressed agitated voice. "Mr. Smith came back yesterday afternoon—I saw him."

"And called last evening," broke in Maida, "and mother said I ought to have been at home."

"You couldn't know by instinct that he was coming. Even the people at the hotel hadn't been informed of his highness's intended arrival."

"Well, I did know it, for he had written mother so, when he sent her that express package, last week."

"And now he'll stay, goodness knows how long! I wish I had chosen my vacation at some other time. Now I shall be tumbling over him everywhere I go."

"Then you'd better not go everywhere," parenthesized Maida, maliciously.

"I only want to come to your house, and there is where I shall find him," cried Brayham, excitedly. "Purse-proud, overbearing—"

"Why, you don't know him from Adam!"

"And I don't want to."

"He is not proud or overbearing. He is very pleasant in manner," Maida said, in the tone of a person determined to be just. Then she added, with sudden contrition: "And, Edgar, he was very, very kind to mother last year. He was an old friend of hers. They knew each other, I believe, even before she was married. But for him, Mr. Broughton would have foreclosed the mortgage, and we should have lost our home."

"And the payment he wants is to marry you?" rejoined Brayham.

"He never said so—you have no right to speak like that," exclaimed Maida, divided between anger and wounded feeling.

"I beg your pardon—I am a brute," said Brayham, stricken with penitence. "But everybody says he wants you. You wouldn't, though, Maida—you couldn't?"

"No, no," she answered, interrupting, and glancing shyly at him.

"No matter how much you were persuaded—how many arguments were used?"

She grew red, then pale, but looked courageously in his eyes, as she answered:

"Please don't say such things. You hurt me, Edgar." He whispered a few eager passionate words, but she replied, deprecatingly: "You promised not to talk like that. You mustn't make me feel that I am deceiving my mother. We—we can't help our feelings, but—but—"

"We're just what we've been from children—the best friends in the world," cried he, his face clearing magically, as well it might under the avowal in her eyes and voice. "I have three whole weeks before I need return to my studies, and I mean they shall be pleasant ones in spite of a legion of Smiths. I say, Maida, I came to see if you could drive over to old Mr. Sherbrooke's with me—I've to go on an errand for uncle—and it's such a heavenly day!"

"But I can't," she said, plaintively; "the sewing-society meets at two o'clock, and it will take me till then to get through with my work."

"I'll go with you and ask Aunt Hannah myself!" he cried, employing the name by which Mrs. Hayden was familiarly known in the neighborhood. "There she comes now. She is looking for you, I suppose."

"Yes, she thinks I have loitered," and Maida began to quicken her pace.

He reddened a little, but hurried forward with her, assuming a tolerable appearance of composure.

The tall erect lady who approached had a very handsome face still; but it was worn and lined with care, though Mrs. Hayden was only a year or two over forty. She had borne many troubles, and borne them uncomplainingly; and, in consequence of this very reticence, had grown a little morbid and cynical. She recognized this, and being rigidly conscientious, sought to guard against such errors; but in her dealings with her kind she could not get further than justice, and nature and experience had rendered her a close reader of character.

She had endured years of martyrdom with a husband whose vices rose from that most incurable cause, weakness, not wickedness. Her son had inherited the same traits, and it was the payment of his debts, after he died, that had forced her to jeopard the home and farm, which afforded shelter and the means of subsistence for herself and her daughter.

She endured her life, but she did not love it. In the whole county, there was no house kept in more perfect order, no farm better administered; but Mrs. Hayden was conscious of possessing faculties which might, had fate proved kinder, have found pleasanter occupation than in making cheese or haggling over the price of potatoes.

But she performed her duties faithfully; managed, busy as she was, to read so much as to be a marvel to the village; afforded Maida the means for a solid education, and gave her leisure for books; while, as was reasonable and right, she insisted on necessary work, however distasteful, being promptly and thoroughly done. It was a terrible cross that her daughter's heart or girlish fancy should have gone out towards a man in whom Mrs. Hayden fancied she detected the instincts of extravagance, instability, and lack of fixed principle, faults similar to those possessed by her dead husband, and of whose fatal results on the happiness of those around them she was only too well aware.

But petty exhibitions of dislike were foreign to her character, and her greeting to Brayham, if undemonstrative, even chilly, was exactly what any ordinary acquaintance would have received; nor did a remark, which he and Maida thought

implied reproach, intentionally convey any meaning beyond its simple statements.

"I didn't expect to see you, Edgar," she said. "I thought you had to study your law-books in the morning."

"As a rule, I do," he replied, secretly chafing, but calling up his most winning smile, which, with his whole manner, would have gone far to soften the hearts of most women in his favor, though they produced no impression on Mrs. Hayden. "I want—uncle wants me—to go over to Sherbrooke Corners, and I came to see if Maida might drive with me."

"I can't let her," came the quiet answer. "This morning she is busy—she has no time to spare."

"We needn't go till afternoon—"

"She is treasurer of the sewing-society, and to-day has to give in her quarterly accounts."

"Don't say any more, Edgar," exclaimed Maida, half petulantly. "Of course, I must stay and work. That's what I was born for, I suppose."

"What all of us were, undoubtedly," said Mrs. Hayden, unmoved as ever, save for the faint smile, too sad for bitterness, which hovered on her lips.

"I beg your pardon, mother," cried the impulsive girl, the tears rising in her eyes. "I didn't mean—"

"I know," Mrs. Hayden interrupted, quietly. Then, turning to the young man, she said: "Good-morning, Edgar," a hint which he took, and left, with a low bow to both ladies.

An hour after, as Maida was shelling beans for dinner, the garden-gate slammed, and a gentleman appeared. He was about six-and-forty, perhaps, but still handsome, with a face that revealed intellect as well as a certain gentleness of character which children and dumb animals would have felt instinctively. As his steps approached the porch, Maida rose, but in such nervous haste that the bowl of beans would have been upset had not the intruder skilfully caught it with one hand, while he held out the other to the young lady, saying, pleasantly:

"I need not ask how you do, Miss Maida. Your roses speak for you. But I am very glad to see you again."

Maida's roses deepened to scarlet, for the compliment from him vexed her; but she was a lady in spite of girlish petulances, and her greeting was what it ought to have been, at least to a man who had proved so sincere a friend.

"I hope your mother is quite well this morning, Miss Maida?" he said.

"Oh, yes. I'll tell her, Mr. Smith, you are here."

"Please don't. She is sure to be busy. I can wait."

He sat down, and began helping to shell the beans, as if it were a thing so natural to do that comment was unnecessary.

"I only came up to leave a package of papers for your mother," he said. "I hardly expected to see her. I know she is always busy at this hour."

"She is at all hours, poor dear," sighed Maida.

He was silent for a moment, then said:

"Her life has not been an easy one; but she has borne it bravely. You are fortunate in your mother, Maida."

It was the first time he had ever called her outright by her Christian-name. It startled her, and her voice was tremulous as she replied:

"No girl ever had a better."

"And your feeling it proves that she has a good daughter," said Mr. Smith.

"Not very, I'm afraid. I'm impatient, fretful—oh, all sorts of horrid things," cried Maida, urged into the confession partly by a spasm of remorse over her frequent short-comings, partly by a desire, for which she gave herself no definite reason, to impress the visitor with the fact that she was a very faulty creature indeed; and the desire caused her to add: "The worst of it is, knowing the things don't make me try to cure myself—not a bit; I shall be just as bad to the end of the chapter."

"Fortunately, there is every reason to suppose that the chapter will be long enough to afford you ample opportunity to improve, if you see that improvement is necessary," rejoined Mr. Smith.

"I don't know that I want to," exclaimed Maida. Then, shocked at having allowed petulance and nervousness to lead her to such an extreme, she added, quickly: "Of course I did not exactly mean that."

"Of course you did not mean it at all," rejoined Mr. Smith, so blandly that she longed to declare that she did, every word. "You certainly have a marvelous example of patience in your mother," he went on: "of uncomplaining sacrifice, too."

"Yes," Maida assented, and hastened to say a score of things relative thereto; for as long as the conversation could be kept on that ground, she felt safe.

In the meantime, her mother was standing at the window of her chamber, looking down unobserved upon the pair. She had paused for a little as the first tones of Mr. Smith's voice reached her ears—paused as one does to listen to a sound that is very pleasant—then sighed, and began to arrange the curtains. She would have been inca-

pable of listening deliberately; but the window was closed, and no word of their conversation was audible. The sad expression returned. A self-derisive smile followed as she gazed. She could see both faces distinctly: though, while she looked, scene after scene from her own past, picture after picture of the unfulfilled future of which her youth had dreamed, came up clear and distinct as the objects palpable before her.

Unconscious of her scrutinizing the two talked on, and Maida was just assuring herself that her fears had been needless, when Mr. Smith startled them into action anew by saying:

"And I am sure that you would do anything you could, likely to further your mother's happiness. She has not had too much."

"I try—I do try," Maida said, confusedly.

"And would still further, I think, if the way opened," was his answer.

Maida shrank from the glance that met hers. It held an earnestness, a fairly imploring expression, which absolutely terrified her.

Mrs. Hayden saw the waves of color sweep over Maida's cheek, watched for an instant the earnest expression in Mr. Smith's face, then she let the curtain fall, stepped back into the chamber, and pressed her hands hard against her breast, like a person suffering a spasm of physical pain.

"At last, at last," she murmured. She sat down in the nearest chair, and a few tears rolled slowly across her cheeks. "It has come. It is what I wanted. Why am I not content? Oh, Jane Hayden, how you flung away your life! Once you might have had this true and loyal man for a husband; he loved you, he offered himself to you; but you chose otherwise, and now see the result. He beholds in your daughter what you were at eighteen, and has transferred his affections to her. Well, you are forty-three, and have suffered enough, I should think, without being such an idiot as to let your heart go out towards a man whom you know loves your daughter, and whom you once rejected." Then a voice from below called:

"Miss Hayden, Miss Hayden, Jake wants to know if he is to take the butter to the depot; and Miss Henderson is here about the sewing; and the yeast is running over; and the cat has upset the cream; and it's all at sixes and sevens."

And presently, down in the kitchen-regions, Mrs. Hayden appeared, the cool collected busy housewife, as different from the woman whose misery we have witnessed, as if a universe divided them.

Meanwhile, each word Mr. Smith spoke was increasing Maida's agitation, and rousing deeper fears. Scarcely knowing what she said, she half

rose, murmuring something about calling her mother. "Mother, probably," she said, "isn't busy now."

"But I don't want to see your mother just yet," Mr. Smith persisted, laying a detaining hand for an instant on her arm. "The truth is, Maida—I've known you long enough to call you so, haven't I?" He perhaps took the choking sob in her throat for a murmur of assent; at all events he went on: "The truth is, I came on purpose to talk with you. I want to tell you something; I don't know if it will be a surprise: at least I trust it won't be an unpleasant one—"

He paused, his usually calm face agitated, his ordinarily deliberate speech quick and broken. A sudden red had shot into his cheeks, too, and he broke off in an embarrassment which might have caused Maida to smile, had not her trouble put her beyond the possibility of seeing the absurd side of anything.

"I can't—I can't—I must go!" she cried, incoherently.

And just then, oh, blessed chance, Pinto, the big dog, came rushing on the scene, upset the basket of unshelled beans, and caused so much disturbance, that it brought Nora and Jake out of the kitchen, though the mistress did not appear.

Before the beans were swept up, a messenger arrived from the village hotel, to say that a telegram was awaiting Mr. Smith there.

"I shall call this evening," he said, as he made his adieus. "My compliments to your mother. This is the book I spoke of to her." Then Maida, having finished the bean-shelling, had her little cry, and when she and her mother met, both behaved as usual, though if Maida had not been too agitated to notice, she would have seen that her mother seemed to avoid being alone with her.

So the afternoon came, and the sewing-circle held its session, which, if less pleasant than ordinary to many of its members, because of the lack of scandal—for that even the most hardened gossip dared not bring into Mrs. Hayden's house—was more profitable; and then the supper which followed proved a compensation even for the paucity of slanderous titbits.

Mr. Smith hired a horse and buggy, and went for a drive, during which he found a chance to play the part of Good Samaritan—though I think the person whom he aided would almost rather have fallen into the hands of thieves than have been forced to owe assistance to that gentleman.

Disappointed of his companion, Mr. Edgar Brayham had gone on horseback to Sherbrooke Corners, and, on the way back, his horse took fright at a moment when the moody young gentleman was riding with slackened rein.

Brayham was flung from the saddle. The animal galloped delightedly away towards the village, leaving his rider on a solitary road, five miles from home, and his powers of locomotion materially impaired by a twisted ankle.

"Very glad I happened along," Mr. Smith said; and made Edgar pull off his boot, bound up the ankle in pocket-handkerchiefs wet in the brook, assured him that he would be all right the next day, and insisted on driving him to his uncle's house.

The restraints of civilization would not permit Edgar to throttle his suspected rival as a reward for having aided his emergency. Good-breeding forbade his even indulging in the relief of sulky silence. More exasperating still, Mr. Smith talked so agreeably, told so many amusing anecdotes, forced such good cigars upon him, and proved such an agreeable companion in every respect, that, in spite of his jealous fears, Edgar could not help being gratified and entertained.

They were not far from the house, when Mr. Smith said:

"This accident has been the means of giving me a great pleasure. I was sure, from all that my old friend Horton had told me, that I should like you. But we've got better acquainted than we could in a week of ordinary intercourse."

"I am greatly obliged—"

"Don't be," interrupted Mr. Smith. "Just be satisfied with saying, if you can, that you mean to like me." Up rushed Edgar's jealousy, and sent the blood to his face. He tried hard to speak—to find some banal compliment—but he hesitated so long, that Mr. Smith turned and stared at him, and finally said: "So you can't say it? Well, I'm sorry for that; but I like you the better for your sincerity. Now give me the reason, and perhaps we can help matters. Am I too old—too stiff—too what? I don't think you could hear much to my disadvantage anywhere—certainly not here: for the only persons with whom I am intimate are Mrs. Hayden and her daughter; and they wouldn't prejudice you."

"Nobody has—intentionally," said Brayham.

"Why, then, you've evolved some cause out of your own personality. Again I'm sorry. I like young men. I've taken a fancy to you."

In his pain and wrath, Edgar mistook his tone for self-complacency—for faith in his own powers to have every person and thing move his way—and he said, quickly:

"I'll tell you—I can be as frank as you—only I don't think, after I have, that you'll be anxious to get up an intimacy."

"Well?" questioned Mr. Smith, regarding him with a somewhat quizzical smile, which added

fuel to the growing flame of passion. "Well? Speak, and spare not. You'll not vex me, I warn you of that."

"I love Maida Hayden," burst out Edgar, pale, and shaking from head to foot, past the possibility of controlling himself enough even to choose his words in the least. "I have loved her all my life. I've reason to think she cares for me. I heard of your being here last summer—a neighborhood like this always gossips. I know what has brought you back. Mrs. Hayden is a good woman, but her experience has made her suspicious. I've been a bit wild—have changed my profession twice; and she's afraid I will never settle down. She's ambitious. Maybe I misjudge her, but I think she'd like to see Maida marry money, even if her heart broke—"

He stopped, with a gulp; and Mr. Smith said, with his serenity undisturbed:

"You do misjudge the mother; as for the daughter—"

"I don't want your opinion, or any other man's, in regard to her," broke in Edgar, hotly.

"Good," said Mr. Smith; "then I'll not give it."

"Perhaps you think your wealth will tell. Perhaps you think she is to be affected—"

"By my opinion? But you don't want to be—so why ask?"

"I don't. I meant to state facts."

"Ah! here we are at your uncle's house. My dear boy, don't glare at me. Listen to common sense: If I were—say if I am—in love with Miss Maida, haven't I the right? Even if rivals, can't we be straightforward, and wish that the one most likely to win her may be the worthiest?"

"I can't," said Edgar. "Let me out. I thank you for your help. I suppose I ought to be flattered by your honesty, and by your saying you like me. I'm not; and I won't pretend that I am. Good-bye."

"Good-bye. Take care of your ankle," said Mr. Smith; for the passionate young man had leaped down with an utter disregard thereof. Mr. Smith was driving on: suddenly Edgar called:

"Stop!" and limped towards the carriage. "I've acted like a fool," said he; "I won't again. But I give you fair warning: that if Maida had ten mothers, and you forty times your wealth, I'd win her yet. I'll show the mother I deserve the prize, and you that money is not all-powerful! Now what do you say to that?"

"I say I like you better than ever. No man ever had a rival more worthy of fighting," responded Mr. Smith; and drove away, blandly smiling to the last.

Evening had come; the domestics were out; Maida had been sent for to spend an hour with an invalid neighbor; Mrs. Hayden sat alone in the porch, in the moonlight.

“Resting, after the multifarious labors of the day?” asked a voice close beside her. She started; for, lost in a dismal reverie, she had not heard the visitor approach.

She smiled, bitterly. But she spoke cheerfully, found some commonplace answer, and asked Mr. Smith how he had spent the afternoon.

“Out driving,” said Mr. Smith, “and improving my acquaintance with young Brayham. Where is Maida?”

She told him, adding:

“She will be home presently. I’m a dull companion this evening: I’m stupid and tired.”

“I want to tell you something,” said he.

“Yes,” she returned, quietly, though it required all her nerve to appear composed.

“I am certain that you misjudge Edgar Brayham. I know about him; I have made it my business, indeed, to find out. Now I agree with you that young people often mistake fancy for love. But it is my belief that Brayham and Maida have not. You are right to discountenance any idea of marriage at present, but give him a chance to show that he deserves her—the promise of a reward to help him on; make them both happy by saying it shall be so.”

Mrs. Hayden sat speechless.

“I came here for a purpose,” he continued. “The happiness of my whole future life is involved. I have not forgotten”—and his voice sank low—“what happened twenty years ago; but I am of the same opinion now as I was then; indeed, I have never changed. I have always loved you. I want you to be my wife.”

She sat dumb while he told how he had longed to see her life so sad led into a channel which should gratify her soul and fancy. He combated her scruples; he pooh-poohed her feeble expostulations—when she could utter them—in regard

to age; he painted their future in colors which were brilliant with romance, even though he was a lover of forty-five; then suddenly said:

“But if you don’t love me, what’s the good? Do you want me to go away? Is it the old story still? Must I leave you alone?—for you are lonely, I see. Am I so little to you, that you can bear to have this?”

“Oh, stop, stop!” she cried; and then he sat down again, but this time with his arm about her waist, and his lips pouring forth protestations as sweet as ever a youth spoke or happy girl heard.

At length Maida returned, but not alone. Even the lame ankle could not keep Edgar in the house. He had started for Mrs. Hayden’s, and met Maida on the road.

Mrs. Hayden would have retreated; but Mr. Smith held her fast, and called, cheerily:

“You wouldn’t hear me this morning, Maida; so now, if you’ve any objections to a step-father, it is too late to present them. Brayham, you wouldn’t hear me, either. But don’t stand there staring as if you never could shut your eyes again, but offer a fellow your congratulations, and tell me whether you think, after all, we mayn’t be friends.”

It is some years since these events happened. Brayham rose rapidly in his profession—thanks to the good words spoken for him to rich clients by Mr. Smith. For, after the latter’s marriage, the farm was rented, and he and his wife took a house in New York. Here Maida completed her education, and under better auspices; was introduced into society, and soon became a reigning belle. She had many offers of marriage, but remained true to Edgar, who, on his part, studied hard and worked indefatigably. He had his reward, at last: for Maida is now his wife, and a happier cannot be found anywhere—not even Mr. and Mrs. Smith. My story, you see, is not a very sensational one; but it has its spice of romance—a romance, like all that pertains to really true love, AS OLD AS THE HILLS.

“IN TE DOMINE SPERAVI.”

BY AURORA VANE.

Lo He stands beside the river,
With His arms extended wide,
Waiting for me over yonder,
Far beyond the golden tide;

Calling to the home in glory
That the Father has prepared
For the tempest-tossed and weary,
Who so oft have here despair'd,

“In te Domine speravi!”

Thou who oft hast been my guide,
Lead me to the Golden City:
Walk Thou ever by my side.

Sorrow, fear, and unknown evils,
We shall dread, ah! nevermore
When Thou walkest there beside us,
Up on Heaven’s eternal shore.

JOSIAH'S LITERARY ATTEMPT.

BY JOSIAH ALLEN'S WIFE.

THERE is one solemn and momentous lesson that it would be highly profitable for male partners to hold tight to their hearts, and hug.

If they would, they'd find that there wouldn't be so much tribulations and strange doin's a-goin' on. And that lesson is this: to *never*, NEVER rush blindly into a new enterprise without tellin' their female partners about it, and advisin' with 'em beforehand. If Josiah Allen had done that in the last month, he wouldn't have been so mortified and almost cut up.

Josiah Allen does—he most always does, I'll give him the praise of it—he most always talks matters and plans over with his faithful companion, and she and he advises together over every important step he steps towards.

But once in a while he gits oneasy, and sort of worrysome, and wants to caper off alone into some new enterprise. And he always, almost always, brings up short against some high fence (allegory), and gits into some tribulation, or trips himself up (allegory agin) over some obstacle or another, and falls flat down. And then he feels sore and bad to think he didn't consult with his faithful Samanthy beforehand. A instance of this took place only a short time ago.

It was a week last Wednesday, and about half-past three o'clock in the afternoon. I had got all dressed up slick, and my settin'-room was clean and cozy and peaceful-lookin', and I sot there as calm and serene as the sock I was a-knittin' on. when Josiah Allen, my companion, come home from Jonesville, all kind of dreamy, and preoccupied in his mind, and actin' strange. And I couldn't think what under the sun ailed him. He hadn't had no trouble that I could think of—or that is, no new trouble.

It had been several years since he had lost any of the relations on his side. He hadn't no law-suits a-goin' on. There hadn't been no reapin' or sewin'-machine agents, or wimmen book-agents, round in a long time. Little Samanthy Joe was enjoyin' fust-rate health. There hadn't been no more than the usual amount of quarrels in the meetin'-house lately, I had got all through cleanin' house, and he wasn't backslid in his mind, not that I knew of, and what was the matter with him I could not tell or imagine.

He jest mentioned incidentally, as it were, that he had had the nomination of path-master offered

to him, and I asked him if he was goin' to accept it, and he said he guessed not. And then he relapsed into that strange and peculiar state agin. It wasn't gloom, and it wasn't mirth; but it was a strange sort of a dreamy state betwixt the two, and sot.

Why, I worried over it so, that once the wild and barrowin' thought come to me that he was a-composin' poetry. But I give that thought up right off: for I remembered that he had promised me years ago to not try to tackle that job agin.

He begun to make up a poem once when we was fust married. But there wasn't no great harm done, for he had only wrote two lines when I found it out and broke it up. Bein' jest married, I had a good deal of influence over him, and he promised me sacred that he'd never, never, as long as he lived and breathed, try to write another line of poetry agin.

He had only wrote two lines, as I say, when I put a stop to it. The lines was as follows. We was married in the spring, and the poem began:

THIS SPRING.

How happified this spring appears,

More happier than I ever knew springs to be—shears.

And I asked him what he put the “shears” on for, and he said he did it to rhyme. And then was the time, then and there, that I made him promise on the Old Testament never to try to write a line of poetry agin.

No, I knew it wasn't poetry that was a-ailin' him. And I watched him close, and could not make out what under the sun was the matter. I asked him if he was a-carryin' anything on his mind, and he said “No.”

I asked him if anything new had happened and took place in Jonesville, and he said “nothin' that he knew of.” And then he relapsed into that state agin.

I worried about it all the while I was a-gittin' supper, and it took me a little longer than common, for I had to git a little extra supper, on account of the school-master bein' a-boardin' there that week. And I kep' my eye on Josiah pretty close, I can tell you, but not a thing could I discover different from the common run of things, only jest his mean—sort of half melancholy and half happy, dreamy and c'rious, as I ever see a mean look.

Wal, the next Friday I went to Tirzah Ann's

a-visitin', and staid all day: Josiah carryin' me over there in the mornin', and comin' after me at night. But I left everything for their dinner, he and the school-teacher. I left what was good, and enough of it; and all Josiah had to do was to fill the teakettle.

And I was tellin' Tirzah Ann about how strange her pa had been a-actin' for a day or two, and how I was almost worried about him, and we got it all arranged that she should come home within a day or two, and stay all day, and see what she thought of him. When along towards night, Josiah come after me, he had been to the post-office, and stopped for me on his way back. And I see, the minute I laid eyes on him, that there was a change in him.

He didn't act like the same man he had acted. His eyes twinkled and he looked bright and sharp, jest as if he was delighted, and highly tickled about sumthin'.

And I says to him: "What has happened, Josiah? You look as if you had heerd sumthin' good. Have you heerd any good news, Josiah Allen?"

"Wal, nothin' particular, nothin' I can explain to you now," says he, lookin' perfectly happy, but queer.

I give Tirzah Ann a look, and she give me a look, and I says to her: "I shall look for you in a day or two."

And she says, in the same tones, or about the same:

"I shall certainly come, mother."

Josiah seemed to be in quite a hurry to go; he said we wouldn't get home much before dark. So I put my things right on ready to start. Tirzah Ann would do up a piece of fresh lamb for us to take home for our breakfast. And little Samantha Joe got on her mother's white cloud over her head, and said she was a-goin' home with us. And Whitfield was a-helpin' find a napkin and a piece of newspaper to do up the lamb, and right there Josiah Allen acted so highstericus and excited and happy that he laughed right out—snickered at nothin' at all, or nothin' that we could see.

And then I give Tirzah Ann another look, and she give me another look—anxious ones. Was he goin' crazy? And says I:

"Now you must come over, Tirzah Ann, jest as soon as you can, and stay as long as you can."

And she says: "I will, mother, and if you want me for anything particular before I come, you let me know, and I'll come any day."

And she give me a look, and I give her a look. And says I: "I will."

Wal, all the way home, that man acted per-

fectly happy, and so he did all the evenin'; and along in the mornin' there come another change: he was jest as happy as ever, but along with that happiness there seemed to be a sort of proudness, and liftedupness, and almost domineerin'ness. And he would hint to me about sumthin' that was a-goin' to take place, that would lift him right up, and make him awful popular.

And says he: "I have always hankered after bein' popular, and bein' made a sight of, and now I am in the fair way for it." Says he: "You will see that I will be made more of, and looked up to more than any man in Jonesville."

And I says, anxiously: "What have you done, Josiah Allen? Tell your partner."

And he says: "I have made a hit; that is what I have done. I have done sumthin' new, and awful smart and deep."

And then I'd persuade him agin to tell me what it was, and he'd put me off, and tell me I would most probable know sumtime durin' the week.

And I'd tell him that I worried about it, and he'd tell me that I would feel tickled enough, and proud enough of him to make up for all my worry—and so it run along.

And Tirzah Ann come home a-visitin' (accordin' to agreement), and he would talk in jest that blind way to her, and hint.

And once I ketched him tellin' little Samantha Joe. He was a-rockin' her to sleep out in the kitchen, and I heerd him tell her "that she had a grandpa that had done sumthin' awful cunnin', sumthin' that no grandpa had ever done before, and she had reason to be dretful proud of her grandpa."

But not one word could we git him to tell what he meant—not one word.

Wal, them actions of his'n run along till the next Tuesday, and he sot off for Jonesville as soon as he eat his dinner, hintin' to me proudly that he should bring home sumthin' that would surprise me, and that would lift him right up.

And says I: "Have you been buyin' sumthin', Josiah Allen?"

And he says: "No."

And says I: "Have you been havin' sumthin' made to order?"

"No," says he.

And says I, for the hundredth time: "What have you been a-doin'?"

And he says, proudly: "I'll show you what I have done when I come back."

And I rithed deeply a number of times, and says I: "I am awful afraid you have been doin' sumthin' foolish."

And he says agin: "I'll show you when I come

back." Oh! how proud and lifted up his axents was, and demeanor.

But I rithed, and kep' a-rithin'.

Wal, it was about four o'clock in the afternoon when he come back, and he walked right in and throwed the Gimlet into my lap, and says he, proudly and highlariously:

"There, Samanthy, read that Gimlet, and see if I hain't hit the nail on the head this time. My reputation is made now for good; I am a popular man from this day."

I says, with a groan, as I took up the Gimlet: "Josiah Allen, have my worst apprehensions been realized? Have you been writin' for the paper?"

And I groaned aloud.

"Read that," says he, a-bendin' over me, and ketchin' up the paper, and pointin' to a piece in it; "and then be proud of the day that Josiah Allen made you his bride."

I groaned and rithed to that extent that I was almost skaint at myself, not knowin' but I would have the highstericks unbeknown to me. Never havin' had 'em, I didn't know exactly what the symptoms was, and I felt dretfully. But anon, or pretty nigh that time, I grew calmer, and opened the paper and read. It seemed to be a answer to the men who had nominated him for path-master, for it was headed:

JOSIAH ALLEN ON A PATH-MASTER.

"Feller-constituents," it commenced, "and male men of Jonesville and the adjacent and surroundin' worlds."

And then he went on to thank 'em for the honor they had heaped onto him in appointin' him path-master. But he felt that it was his duty to decline it. He felt that he must keep entirely out of political matters. "For," says he, "I hain't got the constitution to stand it. I don't feel well a good deal of the time. My liver is out of order. I am liable to have the janders any minute. I am bilious, am troubled with rheumatics and colic, my blood don't circulate proper, I have got a weak back, and lumbago, and biles. And I ain't a bit well. And I dassent put too much strain on myself, I dassent.

"And then, I am a husband and father. I have sacred duties to perform about. Nearer and more holy duties, that I dare not put aside for any others. I am a husband. I took a tender and confidin' woman away from a happy home—Mother Smith's, in the east part of Jonesville,—and transplanted her—carried her in a one-horse wagon and a mare—into my own home. And I feel that it is my first duty to make that home the brightest spot on earth to her. That home is my dearest and most sacred treasure. And how

can I disturb its sweet peace with the wild turmoil of politics? I cannot, I dare not.

"And politics are dangerous to enter into. There is bad folks in Jonesville on 'lection-day—bad men and bad wimmen. And I'm liable to be led astray—I don't want to be led astray, but I feel that I'm liable to. I have to hear swearin', and I don't swear myself—I don't call 'darn' swearin', nor never did. I don't swear; but I think of them oaths afterwards. Twice I thought of 'em right in prayer-time, and it worries me. I have to see drinkin' a-goin' on. I don't want to drink, but they offer to treat me, old friends do, and Samanthy is afraid I shall yield to the temptation, and I am most afraid myself.

"Yes, politics is dangerous and hardenin'; and should I enter the wild conflict, I feel that I am in danger of losin' all them tender winnin' qualities that first won me the love of my Samanthy. I dare not imperil her peace and mine by the effort.

"I cannot, I dare not, put aside these sacred duties that Providence has laid upon me. My wife's happiness is the first thing I must consider. Can I leave her lonely and unhappy, while I plunge into the wild turmoil of carkasies and town-meetin's, and while I went to 'lection and voted? No. And the time that I would have to spend in study, in order to vote intelligently, I feel that that time I must use in strugglin' to promote the welfare and happiness of my Samanthy. No, I dassent vote—I dassent—another time.

"Again, another reason: I have a little grand-child growin' up around me. I owe a duty to her: I must dandle her upon my knee, I must teach her the path of virtue and happiness. If I do not, who will? For though there are plenty to make laws and to yote, little Samanthy Joe has but one grandpa on her mother's side.

"And then I have a great deal of work to do. Besides all my barn-chores and the care of providin' for the every-day wants of my family, I have five acres of potatoes to dig, a barn to shingle, a pig-pen to new-cover, a smoke-house to fix, a bed of beets and a bed of turnips to dig—rutybeggars—and six acres of corn to husk; my barn-floor at this time is nearly covered with stooks. How dare I leave my barn in confusion, and by my disorderly doin's run the risk of my wife's bein' so disgusted with my want of neatness, and shiftlessness, as to cause her to get dissatisfied with home and husband, and wander off into paths of dissipation and vice? Oh, I dassent! I dassent run the risk! When I think of all the terrible evils that are liable to come on to me, I feel that I dassent vote agin as long as I live and breathe."

"Wal," says Josiah to mē, proudly, as I finished reading it, "what do you think of that, Samantha? That was wrote the day you visited to Tirzah Ann's. Did you think, Samantha Allen, that you had a husband who could write such a article as that?"

"Did you write it, Josiah Allen?" says I.

"Yes, I did!" says he, sort o' cross.

"Didn't you have no help?" says I.

"Wal, Ben Landers helped me a very little—helped me fix it out; but I knew jest how I wanted it. Ben Landers, the school-teacher," says Josiah, "who boarded with us last week. The biggest critter to carry on, but knows a sight—oute as he can be."

Still I said nothin'.

"Wal, what do you think of it?" Josiah said, sort o' urgins'.

Says I: "The article is as sensible as lots of political articles are. But," says I, "you mark my word, Josiah Allen: it won't be took as you expect it to be took; it won't lift you up any, and you'll see it won't."

Says he: "I know better. Don't you remember Letitia Lanfear? She wrote a article sumthin' like this when she was nominated for school-trustee, and it jest lifted her right up. She never had been thought anything of in Jonesville till she wrote that: and that was the makin' of her. And she hadn't half the reason to write it that I have. She hadn't half nor a quarter the cares that I have got: for she was a widder without any children, with a comfortable income, and lived in her brother's family—didn't have no cares at all. And only see how that piece lifted her right up. They all said: 'What right womanly feelin', what delicacy, what a noble masterly document her'n was.' And I hankered—I jest hankered—after bein' praised up as she was. And you'll see, Samantha, that I shall git as much agin praise as she did: I shall be twice as popular, because it is sumthin' new for a man to write such a article. I shall be all the rage in Jonesville. I shall be a perfect lion."

I shook my head silently, and that was every word I said; but it was enough—there was such eloquence in the shake. And he says, in a complainin' tone:

"If it lifted Letitia Lanfear up, why not lift me up? Ain't what's sass for the goose, sass for the gander?"

"No," says I, sadly. "It ain't the same sass. The geese have to git the same strength from it—strength to swim in the same water, and fly over the same fences—and they have to grow the same feathers out of it. But the sass: the sass is far different."

"Oh, shaw!" says Josiah; "I know better. I know that what made Letitia Lanfear so popular will make me the rage. I shall be a lion, and you may make calculashuns on seein' me one, and bein' the wife of one. You may make up your mind to be a lioness."

"Wal," says I, "time will tell. But I don't approve of your talkin' about not votin'; you know very well that it don't take you no longer to vote than it does to put a letter into the post-office. And you know well that you had much better spend your time a-studyin' into matters so as to vote intelligently, than to spend it a-whittlin' shingles and a-wonderin' who the next President will be, or a-gossipin' over your neighbors' affairs."

"Wal," says he, a-winkin' a sort of a shrewd knowin' wink, "I don't s'pose I shall stop votin'."

"Then you have lied about it, have you?"

"Didn't I tell you," says he, "that I jest hankered after popularity? I said it to be popular—I said it to make a hit."

Says I, coldly: "Did you write that article, Josiah Allen, jest for the speech of people? Didn't you have any principle to back it up?"

"Wal," says he, "I wouldn't want it to get out of the family. But I'll tell you the truth: I didn't write it on a single principle—not a darn principle; I wrote it jest for popularity."

Oh! to think my husband could be led down into such depths and abysses. But truly, he had the worst of it.

For if I was ever sorry for any human bein', I was for him when he come home from Jonesville—the first time he had been there after that paper come out.

Why, they jest hooted at him; they called him all to naught, made all manner of fun of him, and called him names—mean names.

Why, I s'pose that man suffered—why, there ain't no tellin' how much he suffered from them Jonesvillians. He come home all broke down and unstrung, and I had to go right to work to string him up agin. For I ain't one to desert a companion in distress.

I talked good to him—affectionate—got him a splendid supper, briled a young chicken, and had mashed-potatoes, and hot rolls, and coffee—rich as it could be—and everything else good.

That supper seemed to comfort him some.

But he suffers dretfully—from mortification, wounded vanity, and disappointment. And I don't know how long it's a-goin' to last. They twit him of it every chance they git, and call him everything they can think of that is mean and contemptible.

But, as I tell him, good comes out of evil, lots of times. The medicine is bitter, but I believe it is a-doin' him good.

I don't believe he will ever take dishonest means agin a-tryin' to be popular. I believe he will try to work a little more on principle.

He says he will. He's give the promise sacred—on the Old Testament. He wanted me to let him swear on the 'Pokraffy. But I wouldn't—some-how it didn't seem half so sacred to me. And I held him right to the Old Testament. And I swore him on it.

"I LOCKED IT IN."

BY GEORGE H. WESTFIELD.

I took my grief and I locked it in,
And bolted and barred the door,
And told myself it had never been,
And never should be no more.
"For life goes on—and must go—the same
For months," I said, "and for years.
A man, and weak? It were scorn and shame!
Let women give way to tears."

But lo! in the night I heard a sound.
I woke with a start and cry.
My grief stood there, with its withes unbound,
And looked with its awful eye.

It took my hand, with an icy chill,
And said, with a mock and jeer:
"Your bolts were strong, but I haunt you still.
You thrust me out: I am here."

I seek the crowd; but it follows there—
I cannot drive it away.
The forest wild; it is in the air,
It gnaws at my heart all day.
And at midnight mirk it comes—the ghost!
And it mocks beside my bed.
Oh! hopeless moan for the loved and lost.
Oh! hearts that break for your dead.

FOUR-LEAVED CLOVER.

BY STEENIE GREY.

'NEATH orchard-boughs this afternoon,
In July sweet and glowing,
I stroll where clover-blossoms soon
Will shrink before the mowing.
I hear the song of laden bees—
The merry, merry rovers;
They homeward fly, as 'neath the trees
I search for four-leaved clovers.

The rich dark leaves lean gracefully
Upon their stems so slender,
The blooms bend as a golden bee
Croons out a love-tale tender;

I smile as slowly on I move,
And brush the grasses over;
I'll breathe a wish for one I love,
When I find the four-leaved clover.

Vain, vain the long slant shadows fall,
Trefoil I but discover;
I truly think no luck at all
Is in a four-leaved clover;
But clusters now, by last ray crown'd,
Gleam out, and I discover—
Two dear hands clasp my own: I've found
My clover—and my lover.

IN THE TWILIGHT.

BY MINNIE C. BALLARD.

In the twilight, in the gloaming,
When the sun has sunk to rest,
Then I linger—fondly roaming
With the one I love the best.

Then I whisper, then I murmur
All the joy that through the day,
Pent within my heart's deep chamber,
In a laden silence lay.

Then my lips are swift to utter
All the rapture of my soul,
And, as doves white-winged flutter,
So my thoughts without control

Issue bravely from the portal,
Where, beneath a lock and key,
They had dwelt, until night's presence
Set the tiny prisoners free.

LORD AVALON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A FIFTH AVENUE ROMANCE."

I.

LONDON.

AFTER a stormy passage, the Bremen steamer was approaching the English coast. It was late on a February afternoon, and the clouds, suddenly breaking away, disclosed a clear horizon ahead, spanned by a brilliant rainbow.

"A happy omen for our European trip," said Mr. Lyttleton to his fair young wife. "It is a welcome, my dear, to the Old World!"

His wife, who was leaning on his arm, looked up at him with inexpressible tenderness. People said that, although she had been married for three years, Ethel was as much in love with her husband as ever; and people were not mistaken: she was a living proof that such a thing as true love still exists, and can exist, after marriage.

"But am I to have no welcome?" said Sybil, her unmarried sister, in a half-saucy voice. "I declare, I almost regret having come: you two can think of nobody but yourselves."

"You little witch," said Mr. Lyttleton, "you have been so spoiled by admiration since you came out, that unless you monopolize all the attention, you think you are neglected." He smiled at her, however, showing that he spoke in jest. As for the elder sister, she turned and gave Sybil a look of love that was only less adoring than that she had just bestowed on her husband; and no wonder: for Sybil had always been the best of sisters, and as both women had been left motherless years before, Ethel had come to hold almost the relation of a parent to Sybil.

As they stood there, and Mr. Lyttleton looked first at one and then at the other, he said to himself that they were incontestably two of the loveliest women in the world. They were singularly alike also, only that Sybil's hair was a rich chestnut, while that of Ethel was golden. They were both of the same height, and both had the beautiful figures so common to American women, except that Ethel's was slightly more matured—for she was three years the senior. The face of each was high-bred—by which we mean that the features were refined, and that the expression was full of intelligence and vivacity. If anything, Sybil had always had rather the higher spirits of the two; Ethel, naturally, was a little more sobered, now that she was a matron.

When the ladies came on deck the next day,

the steamer was heading up the British Channel. The sky was bright, a bracing breeze was blowing, the sea sparkled in the sunshine, and the white cliffs of England were seen on the port bow, as the great ship rushed, rolling and plunging, on her way.

"We have just passed Land's End," said Mr. Lyttleton, who had been up since daylight, "where Arthur's Round Table was, you know. If Sybil had been here," turning laughingly towards her, "she is so imaginative, that she would have been sure she saw it through the mist, and Tintagel as well, if not King Arthur himself. We shall soon be abreast of Plymouth, the great naval-station of England; then will come Dartmouth, from which the Armada sailed; and Tor Bay, where William of Orange landed. Every mile of this coast has its history."

"And what a beautiful coast it is," remarked Sybil, as they passed Corfe Castle, and saw the green downs stretching away inland, the white cliffs glistening in the wintry sunshine, the gulls flying to and fro, and the surf breaking in a long snowy line at the foot of the beetling bluffs.

"Yes," said Mr. Lyttleton, "it is a pity that more Americans do not come to England by way of the British Channel and Southampton. Nine out of ten land at Liverpool, and get their first impressions of the mother-country, from the foggy Mersey and its flat unpicturesque shores."

The admiration of the ladies increased when they entered the Solent, and steamed up to Southampton Water, with the lovely Isle of Wight on the right.

"There is Osborne House," said Mr. Lyttleton, "where the Queen spends most of her winters. Ah, here comes the little tug that is to take us ashore."

Our travelers slept in Southampton that night, at Bradley's Hotel, one of the few old-fashioned inns left in England. Sybil was especially delighted with the etchings in their dining-room, from Albert Durer. "How home-like and yet artistic the room is," she said; "so different from the flash ones in hotels at home." The next morning they took the train for London, and found the season a month ahead of what it usually is in February in New York. The grass particularly was as green as in the Central Park in May. Birds were singing—the blackbird, the

robin, and thrush, as Sybil learned afterwards. In cottage-gardens, snowdrops and primroses were seen; the crocus was pushing its way upward; the yellow jasmine was in flower. The sky had that silvery tone we see in Constable's pictures.

Every few minutes, as they flew along, stately mansions came in sight, seen by glimpses far away in secluded parks; now a Tudor manor-house; now a gray old battlemented castle; now a Palladian palace of the last century. Square church-towers peeped above the trees everywhere. Instead of fences, there were hedges. Great wide-spreading oaks stood, here and there, in the midst of fat pasture-fields. The country was just sufficiently undulating to give variety to the landscape. It was very like the southeastern counties of Pennsylvania, where Sybil had lived, she thought; and yet very unlike. "I think," she said, "it is because everything here looks so finished: there is nothing new or raw."

"Yonder is Winchester," said Lyttleton, "with its famous cathedral; it was the ancient capital of the Wessex kings: it was the Camelot of the Lady of Shalott. Ah," a few miles further, "this is Seven Oaks, and those splendid trees off there are in Knole Park: it belongs to the Earl of Delaware," addressing his wife. "The river that flows by your native city was named after his ancestor. You see how English and American history runs side by side." Then, after half an hour or so: "Here we are in London." As he spoke, they left the open country, and, whirling past the dirty smoky suburbs, passed on a viaduct over the tiled roofs of the houses, crossed the Thames, and alighted at Blackfriars' Stairs.

"I have never thought to ask what hotel we are going to," said Ethel. "I suppose to Morley's? In novels, everybody goes to Morley's."

"We shall go to the Palace Hotel," replied her husband, "at Buckingham Gate. It has the advantage of overlooking the gardens of Buckingham Palace. Quite a swell place," turning to Sybil, teasingly, "which will suit you."

Sybil made no reply, except to put out her pretty lip in a pout; and, directly after, they were driven to their destination.

Lunch was no sooner over, than a landau was ordered, and Lyttleton, giving certain directions to the coachman, took his seat opposite the ladies.

"We will devote this afternoon," he said, "to driving about London, and looking at the sights—from the outside, so to say. To-morrow we will take things in detail: St. Paul's, the new Law Courts, the Tower, Westminster Abbey, and, as Sybil will doubtless insist on it," with another teasing glance at her, "Madame Tussaud's wax-works."

They left the hotel, as he spoke, and entered St. James Park, leaving Buckingham Palace on the left.

"Yonder is Bird-cage Walk," said Mr. Lyttleton, "where Charles the Second used to saunter, and feed the ducks. Here," as they turned at right angles, and left the Park, "is St. James Palace on our left."

"What a dingy old hole it is," ejaculated Sybil. "Yet the levees and drawing-rooms are often held there, are they not?"

"Yes, very frequently. But that is part of the English notion of respectability. Anything new is rather avoided. Over there, you see Stafford House, that palatial white building, where the Duke of Sutherland resides. On our right here, behind those high brick walls, is Marlborough House, where the Prince of Wales lives, and which was built for the great duke, the victor of Blenheim. This is Pall Mall, where many of the club-houses are. Here," as they turned out of it, "is St. James Square. That dingy-looking affair," a three-story brick, with five or six windows in front, and painted drab-color, "is Norfolk House, where the premier duke of England lives, when in London. This one, almost as plain, next door, is the Earl of Derby's."

"Why, in point of architecture," said Sybil, "these houses are hardly on a par with hundreds on Fifth Avenue."

"It is the same everywhere here," replied Lyttleton. "Yet the interiors are often priceless with art-treasures. But an Englishman cares comparatively little for his town residence. You must go to the country mansions of these great nobles, if you would see how they live: such places as Hatfield, Burleigh, Alnwick, Blenheim, Chatsworth, and Arundel: they are among the stateliest in the world."

"I notice one thing," said Ethel, after they had been driving for some two hours: "that smoky and dingy as London looks, it is brightened everywhere by flowers in the windows. The squares, too, with their fine old trees, are simply superb. Look at those elms," they were passing Lincoln's Inn Field: "their branches actually sweep the ground; we have no such luxuriance of foliage anywhere in America, unless perhaps at Newport."

The carriage drew up, after a while, in front of a shop in Bond Street, and Lyttleton got out. He returned in a few minutes, holding up some tickets in triumph.

"A box at the opera to-night," he said. "You know, my dears, that when people here have another engagement, they sell their opera-boxes for that night. I thought it just possible we

might get one in this way; and luckily the Countess of Swansdown—yes, that's the name," looking at a bit of paper, "was willing, for nine guineas, to let us go in her place."

"Oh, the opera in London!" cried Sybil, clapping her hands; "it is too much bliss."

They returned by the Embankment, the one single modern thing, Sybil said, that she had seen yet, worthy of London. Crossing Westminster Bridge, to get a nearer view of Lambeth Palace, they came back the same way. The sun was setting behind the Parliament Houses, which stood out against a perfectly golden atmosphere, almost a glorified one.

"Why, there's where Turner got his skies from," cried Sybil; "and yet some people say they are impossible in England. It is like fairy-land."

II.

LORD AVALON.

THE opera-house, as a building, rather disappointed Sybil. It was neither so large nor so beautiful as those she was familiar with in the greater cities of America. But, on the other hand, the audience looked much more brilliant, as everybody was in full dress, and the first and second tiers of boxes were one blaze of diamonds.

"You say these are really the wives and daughters of the peers of the realm?" said Sybil to Lyttleton. "I suppose, then, that high noses are a mark of aristocracy?"

"A high nose is considered so in England," was the laughing answer. "Yes, these ladies belong, very generally, to the loftiest rank; hardly one but is a peeress, or of the family of a peer; and many of them have historical names that go far back into the Middle Ages."

"How they all blaze with diamonds," said Sybil. "Oh, what a beautiful woman! Who can she be? See, in that box next to the stage. She looks like a high-bred American girl."

"That is the Princess of Wales," replied her brother-in-law. "Don't you see it is the royal box? She hardly looks a day older than when I saw her, ten years ago. She used then to drive in her pony-chaise, in Hyde Park, with her sister, the Czarowitch, but now the Empress of Russia. Two prettier women never were, except," with a gallant bow, first to his wife, and then to Sybil, "two other sisters, whom I am so fortunate as to know. But come, Sybil: give us your opinion of those swells in the orchestra-seats. Most of them are Guardsmen—nearly all sons of peers. Did you ever see a handsomer set?"

Sybil made no reply; but Ethel answered for both. The box which our party occupied was

directly opposite the stage, and, at this moment, when everybody was waiting for the curtain to rise, the occupants of these orchestra-seats had faced around, and were—one and all—surveying the house. Hence their fair critic had an excellent view of them. They were nearly all of the blonde Saxon type—tall, yet not bulky, and broad-shouldered. Each was dressed with that perfection only seen in Englishmen of the upper classes: with immaculate tie and elaborate shirt-front; and each had a certain air of distinction and acknowledged superiority that was unmis-takable.

"They are certainly as you say—handsome," said Ethel, "and seem as if they had never suffered from sordid care, nor ever had to think of money in their lives; never had to do anything, in fact, but be agreeable. I never saw so many fine-looking men together before."

"Yes, the English are, physically, a large race, and, when cultivated, as the upper classes are, a very handsome one. The poorer classes are apt to be brutal. You know they kick their wives to death with hob-nailed shoes. But see: the curtain rises."

Sybil, for her part, was not sorry that it rose: for dozens of lorgnettes, during this conversation, had been leveled at her from these very orchestra-seats, until her cheeks fairly tingled. Lyttleton saw it, and laughed. "You'll have to get used to it, my child," he said. "You are fresh and pretty: and London society runs after new faces, quite as much as the Athenians, in the time of St. Paul, ran after new excitements. If you only were an heiress now, half these fellows would be at your feet; but a swell rarely marries except for money. So take care of yourself, my dear."

"I'm not a bit afraid," retorted Sybil, saucily. "But hush," tapping him with her fan; "the opera has begun."

The first act had just finished, when there came a tap at the door. Lyttleton rose, in some surprise, to open it, when there entered one of these very "swells"—at least one as fair-haired, as tall, as elaborately-attired, and even more distinguished-looking.

"Why, Lord Avalon!" cried Ethel, half starting from her seat, and extending her hand as she spoke.

"Why, Avalon!" echoed her husband.

Sybil looked at the intruder, not merely with curiosity, but with profound interest. She had heard a great deal of Lord Avalon. Three years before, her sister, during a visit to New York, had met this young nobleman; and Mrs. Lyttleton had often been heard to declare since, that,

"after her husband, Lord Avalon was the noblest man in the world."

"I saw you from the box of the duchess," said Lord Avalon, after greetings had been exchanged, and he had been introduced to Sybil. "I took Miss Sybil here for you, at first," bowing to Ethel, "but I recognize, now, my mistake. When did you come? Why haven't you sent me word? Ah!" with a sigh, "how this reminds me of a night in New York, when we three heard Gerster sing. It seems ages ago."

"I had intended sending around cards to-morrow," said Lyttleton. "Though we were not quite sure you were in England."

"Just so. Yes, I returned from my tour around the world nearly a year ago. I am so glad to see you. You must give me as much of your time as you can. I am attending Parliament just now, but am not very busy, and shall be altogether at your disposal."

At the close of the interview, he resumed the subject as he rose to go. "Now, for to-morrow," he said: "if there is nothing else on hand, let me call and take you to Rotten Row. I am sure," with a bow to Sybil, "that your sister, Mrs. Lyttleton, if not yourself, will like to see how English ladies ride."

The next morning, while the Lyttletons were lounging over a late breakfast, a band of music was heard in the street, and Sybil, jumping up from the table, ran to the window.

"Oh, Ethel! come quick," she cried, with the impulsiveness of a child. "These must be the Grenadier Guards. What handsome fellows, and what lovely uniforms!"

For a company of soldiers, each man exceptionally tall, and each in a scarlet tunic, was marching by, to the exhilarating music of an unusually fine martial band.

"Yes," said Lyttleton, following the ladies, "it is the Grenadier Guards. They are on their way to St. James Palace, in front of which the band plays every morning."

An hour or two later, Lord Avalon made his appearance in a perfect morning-costume, with a flower in his buttonhole.

"What a nice hotel you have selected," he said.

He was standing by Sybil, who was sitting at the window of their drawing-room. Opposite, on the other side of Victoria Street, were the Queen's Mews; and beyond them the trees of Buckingham Palace garden; and half a mile or so further off, the irregular sky-line, like a black silhouette, of the houses on Piccadilly.

"Yes," said Sybil, with an arch look and a bantering tone, "we came here that we might see

the Queen's peacocks: which would be next best, we thought, to seeing the Queen. There's one now, in the distance, strutting under the trees. But I don't see that it's any better than other people's peacocks, though I'm sure it ought to be."

"You are an incorrigible little radical, I fear," said Lord Avalon, laughing; "just as your sister used to be; and will turn all our old-fashioned conventionalities into ridicule. I offered, you know," addressing Lyttleton, "to take you anywhere; but I must draw the line at the Beef-Eaters at the Tower: your sister here would make a gibe of us all, if she once saw them."

In this gay mood, Sybil already as much at home with Lord Avalon as the rest, they left for Hyde Park. Here, after a little while, the young nobleman found seats for the ladies, while he and Lyttleton stood behind them. It was the hour when all the fashion and beauty of London had assembled at Rotten Row, either to ride or to look on. The Row itself, as our readers know, is a straight stretch of about a mile. Here were to be seen elderly gentlemen on thick-set cobs; young girls in Derby hats, and their older sisters in stove-pipe ones; and handsome cavaliers on more or less showy horses; the grooms, in top-boots and cockades, following behind in procession, as demure as bishops. Some of the young ladies were not only bold riders, but graceful ones; but most of them were rather the former than the latter. Their habits, however, all fitted exquisitely.

Sybil's ideas of English beauty were increased, on the whole, by what she saw to-day; for the majority of the fair riders had beautiful figures: truth is, an Englishwoman never looks so well as on horseback. Lord Avalon was bowing continually to this and that fair rider, and frequently mentioning their names, especially if those names were historical.

Directly, a very stylish girl came along, with the high aristocratic features which by this time Sybil had learned to associate with the most exalted rank. This lady had a superb figure, and rode her spirited thoroughbred with a grace and confidence that Sybil had scarcely ever seen before. Recognizing Lord Avalon, the fair rider bowed in the most marked and gracious manner; and then, as Sybil felt, took herself in with a single look—a depreciative one, she was quite sure. Lord Avalon himself flushed, even through his bronzed skin; but he raised his hat with marked significance, and kept it off longer, Sybil observed, than to any other. He watched the lady afterwards, she also noticed, till the tall high-bred figure had disappeared in the crowd, and then turned to Mrs. Lyttleton.

"My second cousin, Lady Yolande, the Duke of Runnymede's daughter," he said. "I was in their box when I saw you last night," he continued, half apologetically. "We have known each other from childhood."

The Lyttletons, later in the day, drove in the Park alone: and again met the Lady Yolande. This time she was in a handsome carriage, emblazoned with armorial bearings: a coachman, in a wig, driving; and a footman, also in powder and knee-breeches, sitting by his side: the huge hammer-cloth, the heavily-mounted harness, the high-stepping horses, all in the stateliest style. Sybil was quite sure the Lady Yolande recognized them, and was as sure that the haughty lips curled superciliously. What was her surprise, therefore, on returning to their hotel, to find the Lady Yolande's card, as well as that of the duchess, her mother, in addition to half a dozen others, among them that of the Earl of Glastonbury, Lord Avalon's father; and with the latter an invitation to dinner, at an early day.

"This is Avalon's doings," said Mrs. Lyttleton. "That is what he meant when he said he was, unfortunately, engaged this afternoon: he intended to go around, and ask all these people to call. Do you know," looking absently at her husband, "I think he is to marry the Lady Yolande? Did you notice, Sybil, how embarrassed he was when he met her?"

"Yes. And I noticed, as well," retorted Sybil, "Lady Yolande's air of ownership and her evident disdain of poor us. I know I shan't like her."

"Now, my child," interrupted Lyttleton, "do not be foolish. I thought you and your sister were the two women, in all the world, least likely to be jealous of a pretty woman; and the Lady Yolande is pretty—yes, more than pretty: what they call here a 'stunner.' In fact, she's the first really stylish woman I've seen in England. She reminds me, in that, of Lady Dudley, as she was when I was here ten years ago."

Meantime, Sybil had sat down to answer the earl's invitation to dinner. Suddenly she paused, with the pen in her hand.

"Dear me," she said, "how am I to word it? I would know what to say in America; but here, I suppose, it is different; and the English, I have heard, are dreadfully conventional: if one doesn't do a thing exactly in their way, they set one down as never having been in good society—on the principle," with a touch of sarcasm in her voice, "that the only 'good society' in the world is their own."

Mr. Lyttleton, who had taken up the London Times, looked across the top of his paper at this, and said, with a smile:

"Perhaps I can help you out of your difficulty, my little satirical sister. I happen to remember the exact formula. Write that 'Mr. and Mrs. Lyttleton present their compliments to the Earl of Glastonbury, and have great pleasure in accepting his invitation to dine, on Thursday, the twentieth instant, at eight P.M.' Then write another, in your own name, similar in all respects."

"That reminds me," said Sybil: "must I say 'my lord' when talking to the earl, or 'your grace' to the duke, if I meet him? I notice that neither you nor Ethel say 'my lord' to Lord Avalon."

"If you do," with a gay laugh, "you'll certainly be thought never to have been in 'good society.' Dukes are only called 'your grace' on public occasions, or by tradesmen. A tailor will say: 'I hope your grace's coat is to your satisfaction,' or 'your lordship's,' if he is speaking to an earl, or viscount, or baron. But among equals, or those who are considered so, one never says 'my lord' or 'your grace.' It is not uncommon to say 'Duke.' You'll probably hear the duchess address her husband in that way. When very intimate, people call each other by their Christian-names."

"And what must I call the duchess's daughter?"

"If you were addressing a note to her, the proper address would be 'The Lady Yolande Runnymede.' The daughters of peers above the rank of baron are always addressed with this prefix, 'Lady,' to their Christian-names. A peer's wife has the Christian-name omitted, however. Thus, the wife of Earl Cowper is Lady Cowper, and not Lady Clara Cowper. But the wife of a baronet or knight is addressed differently: she is Emily, Lady Smith, or Isabel, Lady Brown, as the case may be. Notice how subtle the distinctions. But they tell at once, to the initiated, the exact rank, you see."

"Dear me, how cast-iron and rigid this English etiquette is!" cried Sybil; "I'm afraid I should never get used to it." And then she proceeded to write her notes.

III.

IN GROSVENOR PLACE.

THE days that followed were a succession of delights, surprises, and excitements—at least to Sybil. Everything was new to her, and she enjoyed everything with the flavor of youth. The mornings were devoted to sight-seeing. To-day it was the National Gallery, to-morrow the British Museum, now St. Paul's, now Westminster Abbey. On fine days, after lunch, she and her sister and her sister's husband often

drove out in the country: to Kew, to Greenwich, and once as far as Waltham Abbey. Their evenings were always occupied with engagements: for the courtesy of Lord Avalon had opened the doors of houses to them that are generally shut to ordinary travelers. "We are not in the swim of it yet," he had said; "the season has hardly begun; but we will do what we can for you: and I want especially," laughingly turning to Sybil, "to convert this little heathen, who plainly thinks all we English still tattoo ourselves, and live in huts as in the time of Cæsar."

When he had gone, Lyttleton remarked on this courtesy. "We have been told," he said, "that English people accepted our hospitalities, but never returned them. It is very handsome of Lord Avalon."

"I am glad, for Sybil's sake," replied his wife; "for she will have a chance to see London society at its best."

The Lyttletons were very much amused at the increased consideration with which they were regarded at the hotel, after so many coroneted equipages began to call on them. This deference was shown especially by the servants. "Zey do zay here, now," said Ethel's French maid, "zat Monsieur must be ze very great lord in his own countree; and I reply: '*Mais*, but my ladies are princesses in zare own rights.'" Over which Sybil, and even Ethel—though rebuking the maid—made merry when by themselves.

The earl, Lord Avalon's father, greatly impressed our travelers. He was one of the few of the real old school left—a veritable *grand seigneur*, not in name only, but in manner. His tall and stately figure, the aristocratic cast of his face, and his somewhat formal yet gracious manners, particularly fascinated Sybil, who had in her quite a vein of undeveloped romance, and saw in him not only her ideal of the true gentleman, but also the great noble, inheriting the blood of brave ancestors, who had followed Richard to the Crusades, and fought at Cressy, Agincourt, and Flodden.

"I don't know how it is," she said one day to her sister, when they were alone together, after the earl and his son had called, "I can't reverence a lord, ordinarily—not one bit; but I never see this old man but I think of the days of chivalry, and so my heart warms to him. Rank, as mere rank, I don't care for: I hold, with Burns, that 'a man's a man for a' that'; but a title that goes back to Froissart, and means something—that I fall down before, and worship, I'm afraid."

"Dear me," said her sister, "you'll be proposing to the earl some of these days. He is not so very old, after all."

"How can you jest," cried Sybil, "when you know I am sincere? I mean, in this, that I reverence not mere rank, but a great name and gallant deeds."

"That's just it, dear—you are entirely too imaginative," replied her sister. "The poetical side of you, your enemies might say, gets the better of your reason, sometimes. But I was only in jest, as you know."

The earl occupied a handsome modern mansion in that most aristocratic quarter, Grosvenor Place, opposite the Green Park. The dinner at his house was not different, however, from a dinner in New York or Philadelphia, except that there was more plate, and that most of it was massive and old. This was, indeed, the distinguishing feature of the entertainment. Everything was solid, from the great silver dishes to the richly-cut glass, from the gold epergne to the roomy chairs. Footmen in livery waited, one for each two guests; every footman in powdered hair and silk stockings: while the butler, in black, with a white cravat, stood behind the earl.

The Lyttletons were introduced separately to every arrival, though this is not the usual custom: and in every other way they were made to feel the warmth of their welcome, and that their host desired them to feel perfectly at home. Among the first to appear were Lady Yolande and her parents. The duchess was extremely courteous, as well as the duke; and nothing could be more sweet and gracious than Lady Yolande's own manner; Sybil began to think she had misinterpreted the look in the Park. Lady Yolande, on closer inspection, proved to be about twenty-five years old. She was tall, as we have said, and of rather a voluptuous figure: her bare shoulders were as white as milk; and her complexion, evidently, owed nothing to cosmetics: she was a Juno, as it were, and in the very prime of her beauty. She was dressed with studied simplicity, as became her style, but with great taste. "Not a Worth dress, however," said Sybil, with a woman's quick knowledge, "but one of Marguerite's; it is not daring enough for Worth, and hardly as effective as he would have made it."

Another guest was a gentleman whose voice, when Sybil heard it, was so like Lord Avalon's, that it made her start; and several times afterwards, during the evening, when he spoke, she looked around quickly, thinking it was the young nobleman. This gentleman was the Hon. Charles Pontefract, a nephew of the earl, and heir to the title, failing Lord Avalon. He was about the same age as his cousin, but had a worn and dissipated look. Sybil subsequently heard that he had already run through his patrimony. Yet his

manners were perfect—singularly like those of Lord Avalon: in fact, like those of all the high-bred Englishmen, whatever their character, whom Sybil had met since coming to London.

During the interval that elapsed between the arrival of the last guest and the announcement of dinner, the earl, who was conversing with Sybil, said, with a fond look in the direction of his son:

"We cannot thank your sister too much for her kindness, and that of her people, to Avalon, when he was in America. Yet it is a very great pleasure to get him back again. At one time," with a sigh, "I almost feared I had lost him. But now he has returned, and for good, he says. He ought to settle down, and I think he will," with an unconscious glance at Lady Yolande, to whom his son was talking. "If I am correct in my notion, we shall all be greatly pleased."

What more the earl would have said, we do not know: for, at that instant, dinner was announced; and the host, crossing to Ethel, offered her his arm, and led the way downstairs. Lord Avalon, at the same time, left his cousin's side, and came up to Sybil. With these exceptions—made, as Sybil saw, from a delicate regard to them—the guests paired off according to rank, the duke taking in the Marchioness of Harfanger, and the marquis taking the duchess.

During the meal, Sybil caught Lady Yolande more than once, narrowly observing both her sister and herself. Lady Yolande sat nearly opposite, with the Hon. Charles Pontefract at her side. Once, Sybil was sure they had been talking of her, for, happening to look suddenly across the table, she saw the high-born beauty color, and avert her eyes, and try to suppress the half-supercilious smile in which she had been detected. Her companion showed similar embarrassment. This brought back, in all their force, Sybil's first suspicions. "She has been making fun of us," she said to herself, and conscious that there was nothing in either her sister's appearance or manner, or her own, to justify it, she naturally attributed it to narrow-mindedness, if not to malice. "It is the women, here in England," she said to herself, "I have always heard, who do all they can to ignore us Americans." But a little reflection suggested to Sybil that she might be, in part at least, unjust to Lady Yolande. "It is probably not malice, after all: for if she is engaged to marry Avalon, she may not like to see him attentive, even in the least, to others: some women are so, I know." She determined, in consequence, to hold her judgment in abeyance, and not to condemn Lady Yolande until she knew more.

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When the ladies had adjourned to the drawing-room, and were waiting for the gentlemen, Lady Yolande came up to Sybil, and took a seat beside her.

"We ought to become better acquainted, my dear Miss Sinclair," she said, affably. "You were all so kind to Avalon, in America, that we shall never forget it."

These were the very words of the earl, over again; and what followed was in the same direction.

"You know, after he left America, Avalon went through Japan and China. Uncle—in fact, all of us—were in despair at his prolonged absence," opening and shutting her fan, and, as Sybil felt, studying her face. "When one plunges into the heart of Asia, among its savage tribes, the risk of ever returning alive is so great. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, but Lord Avalon probably bears a charmed life," replied Sybil, gayly, "for you see he is back again in safety."

"And then, in America, he came near drowning, I believe: yet in fact wasn't drowned. That does look like a charmed life, don't it? All of you were nearly drowned, weren't you?"

Sybil hastened to say that, on the occasion to which Lady Yolande referred, she herself had not been present; but Lady Yolande, with a nod and an "Oh! to be sure, I had forgot," went on:

"That was the time Mr. Lyttleton behaved so nobly. Saved all their lives, I believe, when their yacht had capsized in the breakers. Mr. Lyttleton is a very handsome man—don't you think so?"

Sybil wondered what could be the object of all this. She was determined to be on her guard. So she answered evasively, but with a smile:

"I am bound to think Mr. Lyttleton handsome: for he is my brother-in-law. And he certainly is one of the noblest of men."

"Yes, of course," still opening and shutting her fan, her eyes wandering all the time to the door. "Ah! there come the gentlemen. They have not lingered long over their wine. Avalon told me, before dinner, they would not; for that he had something special to say to me. And his requests, you know," with a smile and a blush, "are commands. Excuse me, for I see he is looking for me. My other cousin will take my place. Charley, come here." She waved her fan toward the Hon. Charles Pontefract as she spoke, and that highly self-satisfied gentleman came up and joined Sybil.

But somehow Sybil did not find his conversation interesting, nor did she that of any of the other gentlemen, for they all came up to her in

turn: in fact, she was quite a belle. She was glad when the carriage was announced, for when she came to reflect on it, Lord Avalon had hardly spoken to her since dinner, and somehow this had taken away all the pleasure of the evening. And yet, what was Lord Avalon to her? What could he ever be?

"Evidently he and Lady Yolande are engaged," she said to herself, when she was alone that night. "Both the earl and Lady Yolande herself hinted as much. It was natural, on the earl's part, to speak. But an American girl, in the same circumstances, would have kept silent. I wonder if this is the frankness on which the English pride themselves? Well, I hope they will be happy," with a sigh. "She is certainly beautiful—beautiful enough for a queen." Then she looked in the glass, and there was another sigh.

Sybil, for the first time almost in her life, woke the next morning with a headache. She had not slept well. She had lain awake far into the night, thinking of Lady Yolande; and her dreams afterwards had been frequent and disturbed; what they were she could not recall: only she remembered, in a vague way, that she had been in infinite distress, and that both Lord Avalon and his cousin had been mixed up with her trouble, and apparently the occasion of it.

She looked, therefore, the least bit jaded when Lord Avalon made his morning-call—as he now did every day. He always had some scheme to propose on these occasions. "Was ever anyone so thoughtful?" Mrs. Lyttleton often said. The purpose of his present visit was to discuss a drive down to the Star and Garter, at Richmond, the first fine day, to be followed by a dinner there, and a drive back to London under the new moon.

"It can't be this week, I am sorry to say," replied Mr. Lyttleton, "for we go, to-morrow, to Warwickshire for a few days. A gentleman who has a place there has asked us down for a run with the hounds. His estate, Agincourt Hall, is a very fine one, I am told."

"Invited to Agincourt Hall?" cried Lord Avalon. He showed more eagerness than Englishmen, with their conventional stoicism, generally allow themselves to betray. "I know Sir Guy well; and I was engaged to go down there with my cousins, this very week—to meet, Sir Guy said, some charming Americans," bowing and smiling to Ethel and Sybil; "but I declined when I found you were here in London. I might have known it could be none but you who were 'charming Americans.' I shall telegraph an acceptance at once, and we can all go down in the same train."

He seemed so sincerely glad, that, somehow,

Sybil's headache left her, and she joined in the excursion for the day with much more spirit and enjoyment than she had thought possible half an hour before.

I V.

THE HUNTING-FIELD.

"BY-THE-BYE," said Avalon, the next day, in the cars, "there is rather a romantic story connected with the Agincourts. The family was a royalist one, in the time of Charles the First, and spent all their estates in his service. When the king died on the scaffold, the then baronet—for the Agincourts were baronets of the *ancien régime*, baronets of James the First's creation—emigrated, with his ruined fortunes, to Virginia. Nor did he, even after the Restoration, return to England, preferring the life in America, he said, to which he had now become accustomed. Thus things went on for nearly a hundred and fifty years. But towards the close of the last century, a distant cousin died, and left large estates in Warwickshire, which had been diverted to a younger branch centuries before, to the American and elder line. The heir, at that time, was studying at Oxford, and decided to remain here and resume the title. Ah, but I see you have heard of this before?"

For Ethel and her sister had exchanged glances which the speaker had observed.

"The Agincourts are cousins of Mrs. Lyttleton," said Lyttleton, answering for the ladies, "and the story is quite well known to them. In fact, the younger brother to that Sir Guy who was at Oxford at the time you mention was the great-grandfather of Ethel and Sybil."

"Indeed?" said Lord Avalon, with some surprise; and he added, addressing Mrs. Lyttleton: "Yet you never, in all the time I have known you, spoke of this."

"It was quite unintentional," replied the lady, smiling. "After all, Sir Guy and we are only distant cousins; one hardly, in America, counts such a relationship."

"But we do in England," replied Lord Avalon; "and it makes even me feel nearer to you, since I know you are partly of English blood. But see: here we are at Rugby; and there is Sir Guy himself, with his four-in-hand."

Agincourt Hall was about five miles distant from Rugby. The road led over a comparatively level country, between rows of great overhanging elms. Mrs. Lyttleton occupied the seat by Sir Guy, who himself drove, and who pointed out to her every object of interest; while Lord Avalon sat behind, and performed a similar office for Sybil and her brother-in-law.

After about half an hour, the travelers turned into an extensive park, and passing half a dozen or more picturesque laborers' cottages, scattered here and there at intervals, saw before them, at some distance, a large mansion of brick, with stone quoins and window-frames, consisting of a central part crowned with a pediment, and two wings, in the style of Queen Anne. The house had a frontage of some hundred and fifty feet, and was nearly half as deep, and stood on a broad paved terrace, encircled by a massive stone balustrade. It overlooked an artificial lake, of very considerable size, that stretched in front at the foot of an extensive lawn. With a last touch of his whip on the off leader, Sir Guy sent his team rattling up to the chief entrance, where he brought them to a stand, after a half circuit, smoking with their rapid drive, as if they had just emerged from a hot bath.

Nothing could exceed the heartiness of their welcome. "You will find, I hope," said Sir Guy, as he bared his white hair before Ethel, and stood, in his six feet of still vigorous manhood, though a man past sixty, to assist her from the box, "you will find, I hope, that we have not quite forgotten the traditions of old Virginia habits, my fair cousin. Yes, here comes Lady Agincourt herself to bid you welcome, just as our mutual great-grandmother would have done, on the James River."

Lady Agincourt was a handsome stately woman of fifty, the very type of a motherly English country-lady. She conducted her guests herself, contrary to the usual custom, to their rooms. "You will wish first to get rid of the dust of travel," she said. "After that, we will meet in the great hall, where five-o'clock tea is waiting for us, my dears."

It took but a little while for the ladies to make their toilettes. Descending the great staircase, they found themselves at the entrance of two noble drawing-rooms, separated by columns. Passing through these apartments, which extended the whole depth of the right wing of the house, they were ushered into another room on the left, occupying the centre of the mansion: a room quite unlike anything Sybil had ever seen, for it was not less than thirty feet high and nearly sixty feet square. Sybil would have felt lost in its immensity, but for the fire of logs blazing on the huge hearth, and for the gay Oriental carpets and rugs scattered everywhere, which gave it a wonderfully cozy look, in spite of its size. Here was assembled quite a party, the duke and duchess and Lady Yolande among them, for the ducal party had come down the day before; and the welcome extended to the new arrivals by the

strangers, on their mutual introductions, was almost as hearty as that of the host and hostess.

Lord Avalon joined Sybil and her sister immediately.

"You will hunt, to-morrow, I suppose," he said, addressing the former. "Mr. Lyttleton tells me you ride to hounds capitally."

"Oh," replied Sybil, "but that is an exaggeration. I have ridden to hounds, at Newport; but there one only follows an aniseed trail; a real fox is not roused at all."

"But Mr. Lyttleton says you have ridden with the Rose-Tree pack, near Philadelphia. Now I had a day with them myself, when I was in America. There was no aniseed bag there; we unearthed a fine old fox; and the country was quite stiff—more like Devonshire than Warwick. If you have ridden there, you can easily ride here. There will be quite a field of ladies. Yolande is going, and nearly a score of others."

Before Sybil could reply, Sir Guy approached, having overheard part of the conversation.

"What is this I hear?" he said. "My fair cousin not going to hunt? That is nonsense. I have just the mount for a lady, and Lord Avalon will be only too glad to give you a lead. He does not go out often, but no one rides straighter or pluckier."

"I shall be very much honored," interposed the young man, with a low bow, "if Miss Sinclair will accept my lead."

"That is settled then," said Sir Guy. "We shall see, to-morrow, that the old Virginia blood tells. I predict that my fair cousin will win the brush."

The meet was at Agincourt, on the lawn. There was a hunt breakfast. Sybil found the latter to consist of rolls, toast, omelettes, bacon, eggs, kidneys, and sausages, while game and tongues were on the sideboard, with wines and liquors. Tea and coffee were served at the table. Very few of the ladies, who came, dismounted: the refreshments were carried out to them. Sybil thought she had never seen as pretty a sight as the lawn presented. The crowd of carriages, the scarlet coats, the neatly-fitting habits, the sturdy farmers, the country bumpkins on foot, made a picture as full of color as it was of movement and life. Every rank seemed to be represented, except the very lowest. The pack of hounds, about forty in number, was massed together at one side. Sybil went out to see it.

"What loves they are," she said to Sir Guy, who had followed her. "What beautiful long ears. How sleek, how strong they look."

"Yes," replied the old baronet, "the Atherstone pack is thought the finest in England."

But see: they are about to move off. It is time to mount, my child."

Sybil found herself, a moment after, on the back of a powerful sorrel, about three-quarters bred, and especially strong in the loins. "Thank you so much," she said. "He looks as if he could leap anything."

"And so he can," replied Sir Guy. "Good luck to you, and good-bye for awhile." He stood with his hat off after thus speaking, and watched Sybil and Lord Avalon move away to join the hunters.

There were nearly two hundred riders present altogether. Of these about a score, as Avalon had predicted, were ladies. To most of these Sybil had been introduced. Nearly half the field wore scarlet coats, hunting-caps, and white breeches and top-boots. The horses were generally heavier, more strongly-boned, than she had been led to expect; they were of all sorts, however: from the high-strung thoroughbred, to the cob ridden by an octogenarian, and the pony bestrode by a lad.

A fox was found, after awhile, in a tangled bit of wood about half a mile from the Hall. The hounds announced it by breaking into a sort of whimper; and directly after, Sybil saw Reynard himself—a little dark object—flying across a field ahead. A moment after, the whole ten-score of hunters were hurrying pell-mell on his track. Never had Sybil been so excited before: for never had she seen such a crowd of hunters, or anything like such splendid horses. A stiff-looking hedge was just ahead. Lord Avalon made straight for this, and leaped it gallantly, looking back to see if Sybil was following. Our heroine was familiar with the fences of her own country, but this hedge seemed to be so solid, so high, so wide, that for an instant her heart nearly failed her. But she remembered where she was, and that Lady Yolande was present; and, giving her horse his head, and shutting her eyes, she drove at the mighty wall. For one moment she felt as if flying through the air; the next her steed came down with a thud, and she was careering after Lord Avalon. From that time out she lost all idea of danger, and took her hedges as if she had been doing it all her life.

"Capitally done," said Lord Avalon, as they thundered on, side by side. "I have a pride in your riding, you see; for I've praised the horsemanship of American ladies a good deal: and often to unbelieving ears."

Sybil thought she knew whose those unbelieving ears were, for she had observed the half-scornful look with which Lady Yolande had seen her come down to breakfast in her riding-habit.

"What, going to hunt?" the beauty had said, with a lift of her eyebrows. "I'm afraid you'll find our stiff hedges, my dear, very different from the fences of your own country; for I'm told that there, if you do strike the top-rail, it breaks down, and you get safely over." Could it have been Avalon, Sybil thought, who had told her this? Did he really look down on America and American girls, and especially on American horsemanship? Had he only come with her to-day out of enforced civility, because she was a stranger, and because Sir Guy had suggested it? Probably, she thought, with some hauteur, he would much rather have been with his cousin Yolande.

Her success in taking the hedge, after this contemptuous manner on the part of the duke's daughter, naturally gratified her, especially when she saw how few others had done it: for most of the field—even the men—had declined the leap, and had sought a gate to the right. This satisfaction was intensified by knowing that the Lady Yolande had witnessed her success. For ever since the run had commenced, that imperious beauty had been riding nearly parallel to Sybil, with Charley Pontefract in close attendance on her. The horse she rode was a matchless one— even better than the sorrel, as Sybil saw; and Lady Yolande rode him with a perfect seat and a consummate mastery of him in every way. "Anybody," said Sybil to herself, however, with less than her usual charity, "can ride to hounds on such a horse as that. But she sees, by this time at least, that others not so well mounted can ride also."

The pace, for some time now, was a rattling one, and the field rapidly became thinned. From numbering two hundred, as we have seen, it scarcely counted thirty, at the end of half an hour. In that time Sybil had taken five other hedges, besides three ditches. With every hedge and ditch, her desire to outrival Lady Yolande increased. The latter, however, continued to take hedge and ditch quite as successfully as Sybil. She still kept her old place on the left, almost parallel with the latter: in fact, it struck our heroine that the English girl maintained that position of set purpose, as if to watch Lord Avalon and herself: "To see me come to grief," thought Sybil, "as she hopes and believes. But," defiantly, "we shall see."

Just as Sybil, her pretty mouth set, uttered these words to herself, she saw, gleaming before her, quite a considerable bit of water. It was a rather wide stream—so wide, indeed, that to clear it at any time was a serious affair. But now, swollen with recent rains, it was broader

than ever, and surged angrily along, between steep overhanging banks. Lord Avalon, leading, glanced over his shoulder, with a look that said, very plainly: "Hadrn't we better go around?" But if death had been before her, Sybil would have kept on. Was not that proud beauty waiting for just such a chance as this? To shirk now would give her the triumph she wanted. The reply to that look was an imperious motion of the whip-hand, that said "Forward!" as unmistakably as if Sybil had spoken the word aloud. Lord Avalon smiled and nodded in reply, as if to say "What a plucky girl you are," put his horse at the river, and cleared it with a magnificent leap. Sybil followed. But at that very instant, a bird, startled from its harbor near by, went whirring just in front of the sorrel, who swerved slightly, and though he succeeded in leaping the stream, he did not clear it entirely, but only got his front feet on the opposite bank. Then, in spite of a violent struggle, he slipped back from the treacherous soil, and rolling over, dragged Sybil into the river, and under water with him.

Her first thought, in the bitterness of this defeat, was "Earl Percy sees me fall!" for even

in that crisis, she had glanced toward Lady Yolande; and witnessed the latter go triumphantly over. Her next was that her life was really in peril. She had never, in any emergency, however, lost her presence of mind; and she did not lose it now. Disengaging her foot from the stirrup, she attempted to spring from the saddle. But she found, to her horror, that her skirt had caught on the pommel. She tried to tear it loose, but it held like a vice. All this time, she was being whirled down with the current; now under water, and beneath her horse; now rising to the surface, and catching a glimpse of the sky and a breath of air. "Shall I ever see that sky again?" she thought, as she went under for the third time.

The frantic plunges of the sorrel, meantime, added to her danger. It was a miracle, indeed, that he did not strike her with his hoofs. The current roared in her ears, as she sank for the last time: a curious dizziness came over her; everything seemed whirling around her; she knew she was being swept further and further from assistance; she made yet another desperate struggle to free herself, and failed: then she lost all consciousness.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A SUMMER SONG.

BY EVELYN C. ROE.

Cry and call, and whistle shrill,
Cricket, lost in clover-bloom,
Summer sweets your lifetime fill,
Have no care of coming doom.
In the morn, when fallen dew
Wets your coat with dripping rain,
Let your joy break forth anew:
Sing a louder longer strain.
Sing, and if you have a heart,
While it swells and thrills with pride,
Your small throat will ache and smart
With the music shut inside.

When the noon-tide wraps the earth
In a haze of languid heat,
Comes a sound of smothered mirth
From the midst of meadow sweet.
Ah! 'tis you, you saucy mite!
While we long for fresher air,
You creep coolly out of sight—
You are gay and debonnaire.
Sing—yet sing—and cheer our hearts,
For the sound of glee is good;
Were you gone, a charm departs—
Something dear, from solitude.

When the twilight-shadows creep
Bound this summer land of ours,

Clear and soft where grasses weep
Comes your voice from hidden bowers.
Then we love your plaintive call,
Though it lonely is, and sad;
It is sweeter far than all—
All your trills when you are glad.
Shrilly through the darksome night
We can hear you 'twixt our dreams,
Mixed with shadows, touched with light,
Till the sunshine brightly beams.

We are glad through all the day,
We are happy all the night,
That you call and chirp away
From the dark to morning light;
Grieving when the winter's chill
Freezes you, and you no more
Cry and call, and whistle shrill
Through the windows or the door—
Oh! the thought a pain will bring!
Though the fancy oft will creep,
That we still can hear you sing,
Waking from a dreamless sleep.

Cry and call, and whistle shrill,
Cricket, lost in clover-bloom,
Summer sweets your lifetime fill,
Have no care of coming doom.

ON A CROSS-ROAD.

BY LAURA E. RICHARDS.

I WAS once walking out of Newport, on one of the many lonely roads that lead into the open country, there, off from the main highway.

Suddenly, I came to a house. When I looked at it, I saw that it was not an ordinary farmhouse. It was large and substantial, standing comfortably in its own grounds, some paces back from the road: evidently old, being built in the solid homely style of a hundred years ago: and, also, uninhabited. There were many windows in the long two-storied front of the house, but all save one were closed with heavy shutters. One window alone, in the second story, glared at me, blank and empty, like a watchful eye. I saw that it was heavily barred with iron. I saw, moreover, that every pane of glass in it was broken, and that the shutter was hanging broken by one hinge. But what, what was that? That at the window? Was it a shadow cast by the great elm-tree in front of the house, as it moved in the wind? Or was it the figure of a man, throwing up his arms with a wild gesture of despair—of entreaty?

I had been so much absorbed in this window, with its strangely-moving shadow, that I had not noticed the quiet approach of a man, who now leaned over the stone wall at my side, and looked, as I did, at the empty window. I turned with a certain feeling of relief at the presence of another human being, perhaps a wanderer like myself, in that lonely spot. I saw an old man, tall and spare, yet of muscular frame, with long iron-gray hair and restless gray eyes. His dress was gray too, of an obsolete cut and fashion, which still seemed well to suit his old-time face and figure. The face was a grim and resolute one, every feature showing determination, if not obstinacy; the eyes alone belied the general character. Singular, restless eyes, which were never fixed on anything for more than an instant, but shifted their gaze with curious rapidity from one object to another.

As he did not seem inclined to speak, I addressed him courteously, asking him if he knew anything about the apparently deserted dwelling before us. "I am rather curious about it," I added. "It certainly looks as if it were uninhabited, and had been so for a long time: and yet a moment ago I could have sworn I saw something moving at one of the windows. There!"

I exclaimed. "Look! there it is again. The corner window, where the shutter has fallen. Do you not see a man throwing up his arms, as if he were calling for help?"

He looked at the window, apparently with no surprise, but with a singular expression of dislike mingled with a certain dread and defiance. Then his gaze shifted to the right, to the left, to me, then back to the house again, as he answered quietly: "No! there is no living creature in the house. No one has lived there for fifty years."

"Strange!" I said. "That must be the shadow of the elm-tree, then. And yet there is scarcely wind enough to—" "Yes!" said the old man, interrupting me. "It is a shadow. At this hour the light plays strange tricks. Would you—would you like to see the house?"

I hesitated. I did want to see the house, certainly, and yet there was something I did not quite like about the whole affair. That shadow, now: suppose this respectable-looking graybeard had an accomplice in the house yonder, say in that corner room, and that I was to be decoyed in, to be robbed, perhaps murdered. Stranger things have happened, on lonely roads like this.

I looked sidelong at my companion, and saw, or fancied I saw, a faint suggestion of amusement and contempt in his shifting glance. That of course decided me at once. "I should like very much, indeed, to see the house," I replied. "It must be a curious place. Can you show it to me?" Without further reply, he conducted me across the deserted garden, and taking a key, rusty and old-fashioned, from some cranny by the doorstep, he unlocked the front-door of the house, and leading me in, threw open one of the shutters, so that the August moon, newly risen, shone broadly in on the bare walls and empty floor.

"This was the dining-room," said my guide. "The kitchen and offices are beyond. The drawing-room is on the other side of the hall."

"You know the house well?" I said. "Perhaps you also knew the people who formerly lived in it, though you must have been a young man when they went away."

"Yes," he replied, "I knew the house; and well, as you say." "These windows," I continued, looking about me, "are not barred. I noticed that the window in the upper story, from which the shutter has fallen, is barred heavily

with iron. Do you know the reason of that?" He made as if he had not heard me, and repeating: "The drawing-room is on the other side of the hall," led the way again out of the room, after carefully closing the shutter. My suspicions were again roused. Was this barred room the place into which I was to be taken? And was there someone there, waiting for me?

I thought at first that I would not go upstairs. But as my companion, after showing me the great drawing-room, with its arched windows and its carved fire-place and cornices, turned and began slowly to ascend the wide staircase, I followed in silence, half afraid, yet half ashamed of my fear. At the head of the stairs we came upon a wide landing, or sort of upper hall. Here again, as in the lower hall, were many doors, opening to right and left: all, save one, hung with cobwebs in heavy dusty festoons. Here also was silence absolute. No scamper of mouse behind the wainscoting, no chirp of cricket, no buzz of fly, or tick of tiny insect: nothing. The sound of my own footsteps—for the old man beside me walked as noiselessly as if he were shod with felt—made my heart beat faster, as if it were some unknown and ominous sound. The old man unlocked one door after another, opening the shutters in each room, and closing them carefully again. The guest-chambers, the master's room, the blue room, large square apartments all, some empty, some partly furnished with heavy old-fashioned furniture. As we went from one to another, my companion told me, at my urgent request, something of the people who formerly lived here. It had been a large family, he said. They had lived in England, and came to this country about seventy years ago: built this house, and lived in it. It had not suited them somehow. One after another the children drooped and died, till only one was left: a daughter. The mother went mad, and died mad. The father—as he told me these things quietly, in a monotonous half-whisper, I noticed (we had come out into the hall, from the blue room) that his shifting eyes rested most frequently on the farthest door on the right hand. I noticed, again, that over this door there were no cobwebs. This was the door of the corner room; of the room where the window was barred: where perhaps someone was waiting.

I turned suddenly to my companion.

"Why are there no cobwebs over that door?" I asked. "Who is in that room?"

I saw, or fancied I saw, a gray shade steal over the already gray and colorless face of the old man. He did not look at me; he did not answer me: but he opened wide the door of the corner room, and motioned me to enter.

"After you," I said.

Again I saw the shadowy expression of amusement and contempt in his face. But, without saying anything, he led the way into the room. I followed, expecting to see—I knew not what.

I saw nothing—nothing, at least, that was at all singular. The room was more completely furnished than any I had yet seen. There were hangings which had once been gay; furniture which had once been pretty; a heavy carpet on the floor, dull and faded; curtains at the—why, what was this? Where was the other window? Here was but one window, and that facing west. It had no bars, and the glass was unbroken. Where was the south window—the barred window with the shattered panes? Could I be mistaken in the room?

I looked around. I saw that the room was much shallower than the corresponding one on the other side of the hall. There was something beyond, then? A smaller room, opening out of this: a small room or alcove, facing south, with a barred window in it?

Ah! but where was the door which led from this room to that? I looked around again; the moonlight made everything clear with its own cold brightness. What was this, on the south side of the room, where the smooth wall was broken abruptly by a space of rough mortar, curiously rough and uneven? Both surfaces were alike gray with the dust of years. But the mortar? At once I saw: that was where the door had been. Across the space stood a small table, with a chair drawn near it, as if someone had sat there when the room was last used. Why was the mortar so rough? There were marks in it: the marks of hands, as if someone had tried to tear it away before it hardened. There were bits of it on the floor—broken bits—over which I stumbled as I moved; and yonder, at a little distance, lay some rusty tools.

Mechanically, I sat down in the chair in front of the plastered space.

And now, in addition to the vague and formless terror which had been creeping over me ever since I entered this corner room—a terror against which I had striven so far successfully as to keep it concealed from my companion: in addition to this, now came a new sensation—something was at my feet!

There, on the floor, close by the little table, something was lying.

With a new sense—which was not sight, for the moon shone clear and cold upon the empty space; which was not hearing, for my own labored breathing was the only sound which broke the stillness of the night—I felt that a

human creature was lying at my feet : a creature in bitter pain, crying out in agony, in wild prayer, in wilder cursing : a creature which sobbed and moaned, and then was silent, only to break out again into fresh sobs and moans, which made my heart faint and sick with the pity and the terror of them. I repeat, I felt all this, while I knew that there was no sound, while I saw that nothing was visible.

Then I remembered a story I had once heard—of an invisible creature of human shape, and tangible, which came into a man's room at night.

I put my hand down, groping for the prostrate form.

I felt the carpet, thick and smooth, under my hand. There was nothing there.

Nothing. But my hand grew suddenly cold—a numbing chill, which crept up and up my arm.

I rose hastily, and moved toward the door. As I did so, the old man, whose presence I had for the moment forgotten, made some slight movement, and I turned and looked at him. He was standing by the window, and his wandering eyes had rested for a moment on the spot in front of the plastered doorway. A curious look was on his face : a look of fear and dislike, but no surprise. Did he see the thing that I only felt I could not see? Did he hear the cries that I only felt I could not hear?

I spoke to him in a rough hoarse whisper, which I could not recognize as my own voice.

"Why have you brought me here?" I asked. "What has happened in this room? What—what is there beyond that doorway?"

He answered, also in a whisper : "I will tell you ; I meant to tell you. But not here! Come outside! Not here!"

I got out of the room—I hardly know how. Out of the room and out of the house, which seemed now filled with horror for me. I took no notice of my companion ; but when I found myself standing on the green in front of the house, my nerves growing steady in the cool evening air, I saw that he was still at my side. He motioned me to sit down on a low mound of earth directly in front of the house. I did so, and he seated himself beside me. I was still much excited, and the old man watched me in silence for a few moments ; then he spoke slowly in a curious half-whisper, as if he were conscious of other listeners beside myself.

"The father and daughter," he said, speaking as if there had been no break in the story as he had first begun to tell it to me, in the hall of the deserted house, "the father and daughter lived here together, with two servants. They were both people of strong will : the girl was very beauti-

ful. Her father lived only for her ; she was his life, his breath.

"She was engaged, with his sanction, to a gentleman of wealth and position : it was a suitable marriage. The wedding was to take place in a month, when—when—"

He broke off for a moment, and looked about him with his shifting gaze ; up, down, to the right, to the left, then he continued :

"There came a stranger—a traveler from another country. He was young and bold : he saw the girl and loved her. Knowing that she was betrothed to another, he wooed her openly, and coming to her father, demanded her hand in marriage, saying that she loved him and him only."

He paused again.

"A bold fellow!" I said. "What did the old man say to him?"

"The father," resumed my companion, "drove him from the house, and forbade him ever to enter it or to see his daughter's face again. He went quietly enough, and all seemed well again.

"One day, a week before the wedding, the old man, who had been away for two days, trying to find in the great city some beautiful thing that might be a fitting present for his beautiful daughter, came home unexpectedly. He came softly upstairs and to the door of his daughter's room, thinking to surprise her with the gift he had brought. He heard voices inside : a man's voice, speaking in love and passion ; his daughter's, answering with equal passion—vows and plans for instant flight.

"He opened the door ; and as he did so, the door of the inner room was shut softly."

"The inner room?" I cried. "The room where—"

The old man continued, taking no notice of my interruption. Indeed, all through the recital he seemed not to notice me, but told his tale as if he must tell it—to the empty air, if there had been no listener. "The inner room, at the south corner. It was a small room, with only one window ; that was heavily barred, for the mother had slept there during her madness ; and the door was heavy, with iron bolts.

"The father advanced quietly to this door, and shot the bolts ; then he turned and looked, first at his daughter, then at her maid, who was there.

"She faced him like a lioness, speaking no word. She was his own child. But her maid fell trembling at his feet, crying that it was the voice of the man-servant he had heard, making love to her. And at that moment the step of the man-servant was heard on the stairs, as he brought up his master's portmanteau : and the maid spoke no more, weeping only.

"The master called the man, and gave him certain orders. He went and came again, bringing plaster and mortar and the necessary tools. The father stood by until the door was covered, and then went to his room to change his dress, being soiled through much riding.

"But, warned by some instinct, he returned to his daughter's room: and the two women were tearing at the plastering with their bare hands, and had torn it half away.

"Then the father called his servant again, and bade him bring more plaster; and he sat and watched till the work was done once more, and well done. Then he drew a chair and table across the door-place, and sat him down.

"The man-servant brought him food and drink, and he moved not from his seat day or night.

"The maid, being a poor creature, screamed, crying and groveling on the floor. But his daughter said no word, until her mind left her.

"At the end of the fourth day, she fell down at his feet and died: about that time, also, the sounds in the inner room ceased.

"The last sound heard in those rooms was the voice of the maid as she fled, leaving her curse and the curse of the dead upon her master. The last footstep that left those rooms was the step of the father when he carried his daughter out dead in his arms."

The whisper stopped for a moment. The wandering eyes, with a look of fear, rested for an instant on a low mound of earth under the south window.

"He buried her there," said the old man. "There, under the barred window. That is her grave."

"And the father?" I asked.

"He died in his time also, and was buried—was buried—"

The whisper died away. I looked at the long low mound under the barred window, and then glanced at the one on which I sat. A sickening

faintness crept over me, and I could hardly see. But I staggered to my feet.

"My God!" I cried. "This is a grave on which I have been sitting. Is he—is he buried here? Is this his accursed grave?"

The old man rose also to his feet. The wandering eyes now wandered no more, but were fixed on mine, with what strange and sinister shadow in them I cannot say. The numbing sickness stole over me more painfully. Horror seemed to fill my breast; every breath was a gasp of agony. I repeated, scarcely hearing myself: "Is this his accursed grave?"

The old man leaned forward and touched me lightly on the breast.

"Yes," he said. "Mine!"

Have patience with me a moment more. I have almost done. While the icy chill of that touch still sent the blood creeping cold to my heart—while the look of those eyes still left my eyes seared and dazed—even in that instant of time it came upon me that I was alone.

My companion, who at one heartbeat stood apparently in flesh and blood before me, at the next was—nowhere. But what was that shadow that crept like a gray cloud across my sight? And what was that sound, half groan, half laugh, that passed like the moan of the wind?

I fled, terror lending me strength to flee. I moved as one moves in a nightmare, feeling as if I should never reach the open road, where at least was safety. At length, however, my hands touched the stone posts of the gateway.

At that instant, an impulse more powerful even than my fear forced me to turn round, to look back once more at the deserted house.

The moon, at that instant, shone out from behind a cloud; her light fell broadly on the blank shattered panes of the barred window: and I saw, as plainly as I see your face to-night, the figure of a man, tossing up his arms in an agonized gesture of despair and entreaty.

EURYDICE.

BY CHARLOTTE E. NELSON.

SHE lifted it from off the sward—poor little withered flower!

It had been sadly trampled on in an untimely hour; Sadly she kissed its faded leaves, its broken petals pressed, And, with a yearning tender touch, its withered form caressed.

Sweet was the fragrance that it shed, though it would bloom no more,

And sweet, methinks, the memories it brought from out their store.

Or was it only pity that had such a wondrous power

To make the tears unbidden fall upon the little flower?

Was hers a heart whose memories lie buried till they rise Unto the sound of music or the sight of sunny skies? And did the perfume of the flower an old, old story tell, Just as the sea is echoed in the murmur of its shell?

Perchance she felt the yearning that broke Orpheus' heart of love

When crying for Eurydice through Rhodope's dark grove. I wonder did the longing for one a whispering answer send, Or did she cry "Eurydice!" unanswered to the end?